HELL IN COLUMBIA, TENN.

by ROBERT MINOR

MARCH 19
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NEW MASSES

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~~BERLIN-TOKYO~~ AXIS

WASHINGTON-LONDON AXIS?

The Menace of World War III

by THE EDITORS

ART IS A WEAPON

by JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

***ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:** Marx and the Commune, by Samuel Bernstein.*

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BETWEEN OURSELVES

You have all attended hundreds of parties—and there are all kinds; big ones in hired halls and small ones in your friends' homes; times when you paid your admission and entertainment fees for the Spanish loyalists, the Kentucky miners, the Communist Party; other times when you merely sat around somebody's living room and schmoozed. The odds are safe that you, personally, enjoyed most of these parties; they are equally safe that, humanly, you griped to your respective husband or wife after you got home — there were too many people around, the music wasn't so good, advertised members of the floor show came too late. But your biggest complaint was, actually, the alarm clock which always rang at 7 AM—every A.M.—with an insistent shrilling which meant you'd better pull yourself out of bed if you wanted to keep the kind of job which brought in just enough to pay your rent, and which kept you from hanging on any old limb, or from being up an available creek.

That alarm clock will continue to shrill for quite some time. If it doesn't waken you so that you may arrive fresh and springlike at your office or factory, it will certainly rout you out in time to get on your picketline—and let it be emphasized that it *is* yours, even if the particular outfit for which you work isn't on strike.

But here's another idea. You can set that alarm clock for evening just as well as morning, and you can plan a party which you'll enjoy. No need to be bored or to feel an evening's wasted when you get home. NEW MASSES' recent fund appeals have brought results, but there still has not been the necessary response. What to do about it? Plan your own party—invite your own guests. If you want to hire a hall, do that. If you would prefer to stage a session in your house, go ahead.

The point is that in order to keep both you and your guests from being bored, NM will help you furnish any kind of entertainment it can. This, of course, is based partly on geography. We cannot guarantee to send editors, cartoonists, or contributors to California or even the Middle West. But if you will let us know that you would like to have a party for NM, the magazine will do everything it can to see that you have a pleasant evening—the kind that makes one say, "Let's do it again soon." So let us know what we can do and we'll try hard.

Public libraries are the kind of places remembered pleasantly from childhood, even though it was not permitted to speak aloud in the reading rooms. There's no point tearing down old customs—and if you'll carry through the following suggestion, shouting is not necessary.

All you have to do is ask the person in charge of periodicals whether or not your particular library subscribes to NM. If not, please say that 200 subscriptions have been donated by our readers as gifts to libraries; that we would like to give that library a subscription; and then write and tell us where to send it.

It'll be in a few ports—if not in every: NEW MASSES, dated February 5, titled "This Is Your Strike." The National Maritime Union is mailing that issue to forty port agents, asking them to read it, and to subscribe to the magazine.

A NOTE to tell you that NEW MASSES' Seventh Annual Art Auction was its usual success—not only from the magazine's and artists' standpoints, but because it proved again the importance of this yearly event both here and on the Coast. Many paintings were not sold on Sunday because it was physically impossible to auction them within the time allotted, but those works still on hand will be on sale at the ACA Gallery, 61 E. 57th Street, until Sunday, March 17. Gallery hours are eleven to six; artists include Milton Avery, A. S. Baylinson, Eugene Berman, Henry Botkin, Robert Brackman, Alexander Brook, David Burliuk, Cikovsky, Dobkin, Philip Evergood, Ernest Fiene, Chaim Gross, Joe Hirsch, Sigmund Menkes, John Sloan, the Soyers, Sol Wilson, William Zorach. Stop in and buy now—your bargain will be something you boast about to your progeny.

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NEW MASSES
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WASHINGTON-LONDON AXIS?

BY THE EDITORS

THERE the two of them stood in a little town in Missouri. One talked and the other smiled. One called on Americans to die for a stinking, slave-ridden empire. The other applauded. The British imperialist fugleman called for war. The other, knowing in advance what he would say, described it as constructive. No rebuke; no disagreement. Again, then, death before all the dead are buried. Flame and fire again before the scarred and seared have been healed. That was Winston Churchill's legacy to the world and Harry Truman's tacit endorsement of it.

The man booted out of office by his own people, the archbishop of torydom, came to tell us how we shall live. And what is the life he maps for us? An Anglo-American tyranny to ride roughshod over the globe. He said that it was against Communism that he spoke and that it was against Communism that he wanted the armies and navies combined. The words were Churchill's but the plan is Hitler's. Churchill's own domain of plunder is ripping at the seams and he asks Americans to save it for him. We are to be his trigger men, we are to provide him with billions in money to regain what the robber barons are losing.

The world is moving away from its master-slave pattern. The peoples of Europe, the peoples of the Middle and Far East are taking the first steps toward a new life. The world struggle for independence is merging. The peasant in Bulgaria finds common ground with the peasant in India and China. The French worker knows that his democratic advances are tied to what happens to British and American workers. And this growing solidarity, this sense of interdependence in the anti-imperialist battle, is what Churchill calls "communism." He means to throttle this drive forward on the part of the world's oppressed and he means to destroy it at all cost in the one area of the earth, the Soviet Union, where men have torn from their backs the tyranny of centuries and shaped a freedom that attracts the freedom-hungry everywhere.

For his crusade against "communism," Churchill needs a new anti-Comintern. That is the baldest meaning of his project for an Anglo-American alliance to be followed by secret military agreements, joint naval exercises in the Mediterranean area, suspicious military ventures in the Arctic. The political alliance is finally to be ringed by the power of the atom. German imperialism is to be rebuilt as a reserve force in Central Europe while Japan is reconstructed as a place d'armes against the USSR and the national liberation forces. What a beautiful world to contemplate! What a fine future for Americans who will be given the honor of being Herr Churchill's exclusive allies!

And Americans must think hard and think fast about the new graves that are being dug for those who

"We cannot be blind to the fact that the liberties enjoyed by individual citizens throughout the United States and throughout the British Empire are not valid in a considerable number of countries. . . ."—Churchill

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just managed to escape them in the last four years. They must ask how was it possible for the President of the United States to allow Churchill to say what he did? For there is no gainsaying the truth that Churchill consulted with the White House before his speech was written and was, in fact, urged to speak by Harry Truman.

Churchill could say what he did because he was merely saying from the British imperialists' point of view what the American imperialists were discussing among themselves. Without American imperialism's initiative and support the whole atmosphere in which Churchill spoke could never have been created. Churchill's address was, therefore, one chapter in a whole series of American imperialist provocations against the American people themselves and against the Soviet Union. Our gilded boys on top are out to undermine the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. They mean to destroy the United Nations Organization by converting it into an organization of the disunited wherein America reigns supreme.

President Truman's officials deliberately "lost" a Soviet request for a large loan. That was no accident. It symbolizes how Washington is using its economic power to give financial support only to those governments which agree with its reactionary foreign policy. Small wonder that the semi-fascist government of Turkey is given $10,000,000 while the democratic government of Poland is told that it will not receive a nickel in credits if it pushes its nationalization program. Washington is committing financial acts of aggression against every state that refuses to bend the knee before it.

From the financial to the military is but a short step, for both methods will follow each other logically as long as monopoly capital, the giant trusts, dictate American foreign policy. The profit-mad will even play with the British imperialists as long as they prove useful and then discard them in the dog-eat-dog struggle for world domination.

II

IT ISN'T at all strange that the American imperialists hide their expansionist drives by charging the USSR with expansionism. It's the old "stop-thief" trick whereby the real thief tries to divert attention from himself. If you plow through the noise-making and the bluster of Churchill, Vandenberg, Byrnes and the other tories you find two key spots in the world about which they are really worried and with respect to which they have gone into action. One is Iran and the other Manchuria. Byrnes has formally protested the presence of Soviet troops in the former and the removal of some industrial war potential in the latter.

The selection of these two issues is no accident. On the contrary it indicates precisely what imperialism, whether of the American or British variety, is up to. And if you spend a moment looking into the historic role of Iran and Manchuria you must reach the conclusion that what the reactionaries are concerned about is not "Russian expansion," as they put it, but their ability to encircle the Soviet Union with the old cordon sanitaire system preliminary to an all-out war against her.

A common element of outstanding importance exists between Iran and Manchuria. Both are historic points of military attack upon the Soviet Union. For twenty-seven years these areas have been the scene of international imperialist intrigue threatening the integrity of the great socialist nation which they both border. Britain and the United States, allied with the most reactionary forces in both regions, are today desperately trying to recapture them for their own imperialist ambitions against the Soviet Union. That is in large respect the significance of Byrnes' notes of protest.

The traditional role of these areas is too often forgotten in the current debate. Has anyone seen a recent reference by the commercial press to the fact that beginning in the spring of 1919 Iran (then called Persia) was the military base from which British and Indian troops attacked the Red Armies in Baku and Turkestan? The anti-Bolshevik Denikin's Caspian Sea fleet was able to operate only because of British control over Iran. It was the Red Army's defeat of Denikin and his imperialist allies and the Soviets' formal renunciation of all Czarist special privileges in Iran which stabilized relations in that part of the world after the period of intervention.

The story of Manchuria is virtually identical, the only real difference being that Japan, instead of Britain, played the dominant imperialist role. There is no explanation or justification of America's and Britain's appeasement of Japanese militarism following the seizure of Manchuria in 1931 other than the expectation and hope cherished by these imperialist powers that the Mikado's forces were preparing for an attack upon the Soviet Union rather than upon themselves.

It is evident that those chapters of imperialist history were not closed by World War II. They were merely interrupted. The situation in Iran today is not one of Soviet aggression as Truman, Byrnes, Churchill and Bevin would have us believe. It is one of Soviet security against Anglo-American aggression which is seeking to force Iran back into their imperialist orbit by backing (with arms and money and diplomacy) the most corrupt, feudal elements against the people.

The pattern is similar in Manchuria. Byrnes and Chiang Kai-shek have already violated the unity agreements signed in Chungking at the end of January by seeking to impose one-party Kuomintang rule over the Manchurian provinces. Byrnes, in his protest to the Soviet Union, revives the hoary imperialist doctrine of the open door. Why? Because he wishes to create a situation whereby Japanese war industry in Manchuria can be held in trust by American corporations and Kuomintang puppets and perhaps eventually given back to the Japanese *Zaibatsu* when the time is ripe to form another alliance with them against democracy and the Soviet Union. Under such circumstances what choice is

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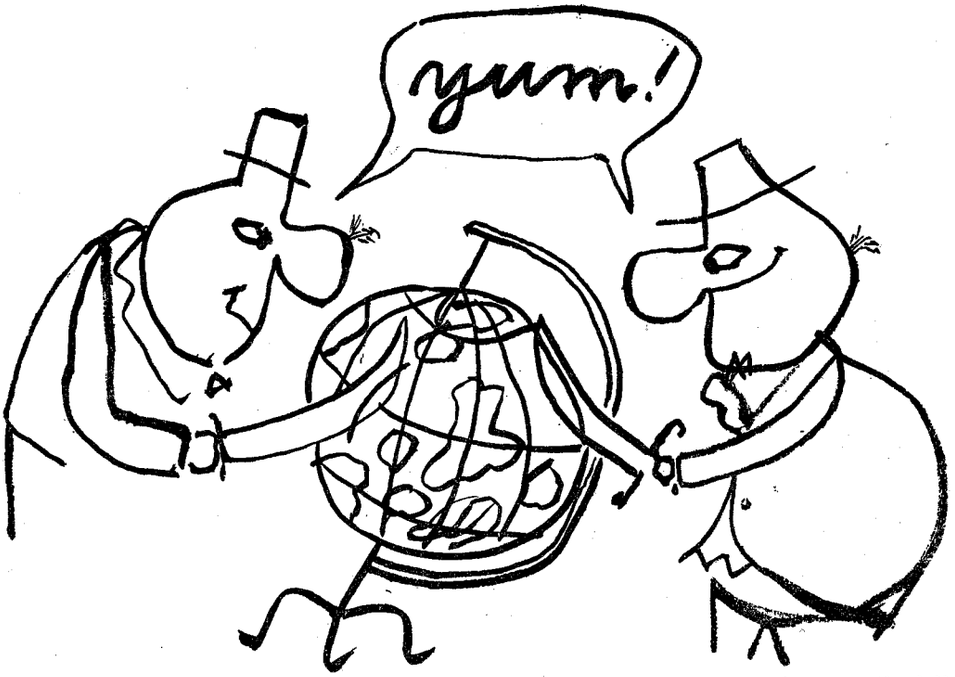
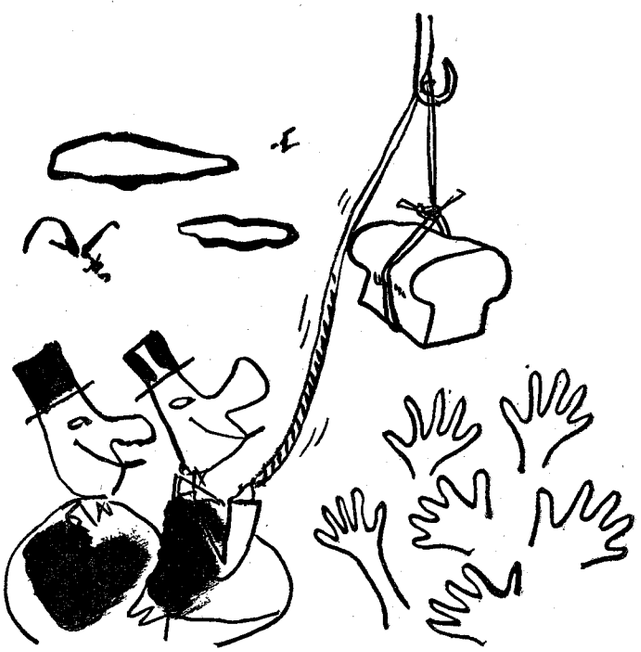


"Fraternal association [between Great Britain and the United States] requires . . . the intimate relationships between our military advisers. . . ."—Churchill

"Opportunity is here now, clear and shining, for both our countries."—Churchill



". . . and there is no reason except human folly or subhuman crime which should deny to all the nations the inauguration and enjoyment of an age of plenty."—Churchill

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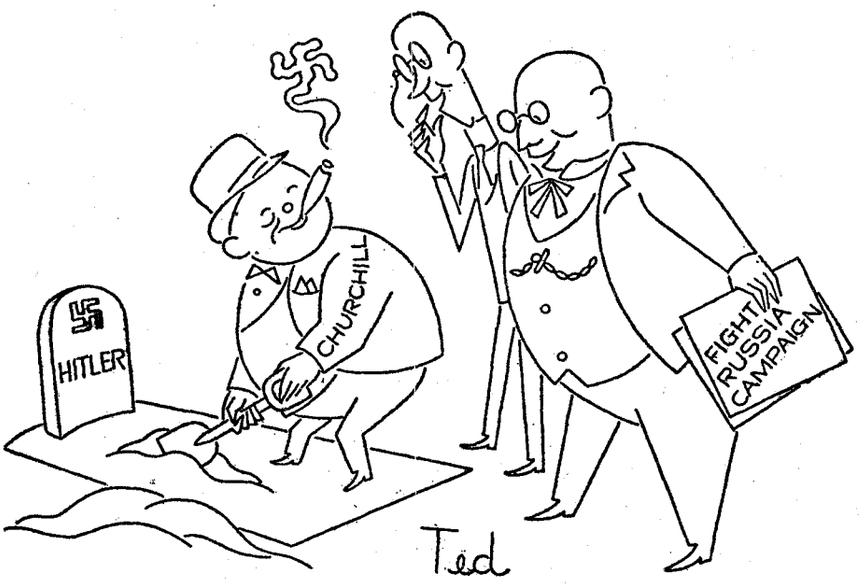

"Don't worry, boys—he's not really dead."

there for the Soviet Union except to take whatever measures are necessary to prevent this Manchurian dagger from again threatening its very existence?

III

TO PREPARE for war against other nations American imperialist reaction must also make war on our own people. The synthetic Canadian-US "spy scare" has been used by the Army to revive efforts to pass the infamous May-Johnson bill, which would shackle scientific research and place it at the mercy of the brass hats. The Department of Justice is trying to strengthen the Gestapo features of this legislation by providing for fantastic penalties such as $300,000 fines and thirty-year jail sentences. Not to be outdone, the Wood-Rankin committee to promote un-American activities has concocted a spy scare of its own.

This fascist outfit and the FBI are vying with each other in witch-hunting *a la* Goebbels. At the moment when Franco is feeling the weight of public protest against his crimes, the Wood-Rankin committee has had the effrontery to rush to his aid by citing for contempt seventeen members of the executive board of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee. And the FBI has sent agents to Columbia, Tenn., not to arrest the perpetrators of the outrages against the Negro population of that community, but to help terrorize the victims themselves, as well as sympathetic white citizens. Churchill's blather about "Communist fifth columns" aims to encourage these attacks on democracy and the shielding of the real fifth columnists: the Gerald L. K. Smiths, Rankins, Bilbos, Herbert and J. Edgar Hoovers, Hearsts, McCormicks and other hatchet-men of the giant trusts that want to drive our country on the bloody road to fascism and war.

But in the United States, as in Europe, as in the Far and Middle East, the democratic tides beat strong against reaction's dikes. The workers are defending their living standards, and they have won to their side veterans and middle-class people as never before. The Negro people, South and North, are battling for equal citizenship and with them stand millions of whites.

And what a boomerang the Churchill speech has proved! In this country, in Britain and in many other lands, it has evoked raging indignation. Senators Pepper, Kilgore and Taylor issued a stinging reply which declared:

"Mr. Churchill's proposal would cut the throat of the United Nations Organization. It would destroy the unity of the Big Three without which the war could not have been won and without which the peace cannot be saved. It is shocking to see Mr. Churchill, who rose to power on the repudiation of Chamberlain, align himself with the old Chamberlain Tories who strengthened the Nazis as part of their anti-Soviet crusade."

The statement of the three Senators has been endorsed by Secretary of Commerce Wallace and forty other prominent Americans, including Fiorello H. LaGuardia, Edward L. Bernays, Ira Hirschmann, Jose Ferrer, Jo Davidson, Melvyn Douglas, Cecil Brown, Marc Connelly, Prof. Leslie Dunn and Frederic March. Churchill's speech was also denounced by the National Citizens Political Action Committee and the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions.

Not Soviet "expansionism," but the expansion of democracy is what the would-be peace-wreckers in America and Britain fear. It would be folly to underestimate their capacity for evil. If the people are to win the battle against war and imperialism, they must quickly overcome two serious weaknesses: the passivity of labor, including the CIO, on questions of foreign policy, in contrast to the militancy shown on domestic questions; the lack of an organized peace movement. This gives added importance to the Emergency Conference on Winning the Peace, which is being held in Washington April 5-6-7 and is sponsored by twenty-three Congressmen, two Senators and more than 200 other leading Americans.

THERE is no time to lose. To all who want to prevent World War III and keep America from becoming the Germany of the post-Hitler era, we underscore the following from a statement of the Communist Party of the United States:

To preserve peace, let the American people speak, act, unite!

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Organize mass meetings and demonstrations.

Send telegrams and resolutions to President Truman, to your Congressmen, to the press.

Fulfill the Moscow, Potsdam and Yalta agreements and denazify and demilitarize Germany and Japan.

Support the national liberation struggles of the colonial and dependent peoples.

No loans or credits to the British reactionaries and colonial overlords.

Grant adequate food supplies and credits to the peoples' democracies.

End the armaments race. No appropriations or universal military service for imperialist adventures and war.

Reestablish Big Three unity, the key to world peace.

Out of Churchill's Mouth

ABOUT Franco's regime of butchery and oppression, Churchill on May 24, 1944 said: "Some people think that our foreign policy toward Spain is best expressed by drawing comical or even rude caricatures of General Franco. . . . I have no sympathy with those who think it clever and even funny to insult and abuse the government of Spain whenever the occasion serves. . . . I am here to speak kindly words about Spain."

After Churchill made these comments in Parliament, President and Mrs. Roosevelt publicly disassociated themselves from Churchill's views on Spain. Mrs. Roosevelt in effect said that Churchill's thinking still runs in terms of an earlier world of power politics. Said Mrs. Roosevelt on May 31, 1944:

"Mr. Churchill has thought a certain way for sixty years and I don't think he wants to change."

●

IN ROME, Jan. 20, 1927, Winston Churchill openly espoused fascism. He said at that time: "I could not help being charmed by Signor Mussolini's gentle and simple bearing and by his calm, detached poise in spite of so many burdens and dangers. . . . If I had been an Italian I am sure that I should have been whole-heartedly with you from the start to the finish in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism. . . . Your movement [the fascist Blackshirts] has rendered a service to the whole world. . . . Italy has shown that there is a way of fighting the subversive forces which can rally the masses of the people, properly led, to value and wish to defend the honor and stability of civilized society. . . ."

Let Winston Churchill answer to the dead and the maimed, to the thousands of American and British troops who fought to undo and crush Mussolini fascism.

●

ON FEB. 23, 1944, Churchill hailed Marshal Tito, the Communist head of the Yugoslav Liberation forces and now head of the Yugoslav government with Churchill's approval. Said Churchill then: "In Marshal Tito the Partisans have found an outstanding leader, glorious in the fight for freedom. . . . Of course the Partisans of Marshal Tito are the only people who are doing any effective fighting against the Germans. . . . For a long time I have taken particular interest in Marshal Tito's movement and have tried and am trying by every means to bring him help."

Two years later, the war-mongering Churchill says the following of the same Communists who helped to destroy the German Wehrmacht and restore democratic society in Europe: "The Communist Parties or fifth columns constitute a growing challenge and peril to Christian civilization."

●

"TERRIBLE indeed," said Churchill in February, 1945, "would be the fortunes of mankind if some awful schism arose between the Western democracies and the Russian people." Churchill's speech of a year ago, is satisfactory comment on Churchill's speech of last week.

●

CHURCHILL is reverting to old form. Anti-Sovietism is nothing new to him. He was among the leading conspirators against Moscow from the day the Russian people took power from the Czars. Now it turns out that the interlude of World War II has taught him next to nothing. The man who hypocritically eschews foreign intervention in the affairs of other countries helped send spies into the USSR and to organize armies of interventionists in 1919. He protested the withdrawal of Allied troops from Russia because their withdrawal would mean that "there would be no further armed resistance to the Bolsheviks." He conferred with White Russian generals in London and complained bitterly of the opposition of British workingmen and liberals against military aid to the fighting anti-Sovieteers. He described Admiral Kolchak, the White Russian tyrant and anti-Semite who organized an anti-Soviet army in Siberia, as "honest," "incorruptible" and "patriotic." Because American troops under General Graves refused to fight the Soviets in Siberia, Kolchak called them "offscourings of the American Army, Jewish emigrants, with a corresponding staff." This was the man whom Churchill praised without reservation.

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HELL IN TENNESSEE

By ROBERT MINOR

Columbia, Tenn.

THEY are lying about Columbia, Tennessee.

There was no "Negro uprising" as the United Press called it in the stream of poison it pours into small-town Southern newspapers such as the Jackson, Miss., *Daily News*.

There was no "howling mob" composed of any significant part of the population of this industrial town of 12,000 inhabitants, of whose breadwinners 2,200 are members of the CIO and AFL unions and 1,300 more are in process of organization, and whose biggest union, the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, contains more than 600 Negro and nearly 600 white members.

There was no "protection" of "frightened Negroes" by the brave soldiers and policemen. The Negroes were not frightened, and the soldiers and policemen protected nobody.

There was to be a lynching. But it didn't happen. About fifty armed men, white of face and liver, showed up. Three orators exhorted them; two told the fifty men to go into the Negro section called "Mink Slide" and get the intended victim; the newspapers say the third orator, a brother of a chief participant in the assault that precipitated the near-lynching, told the armed men to "let well enough alone and don't stir up any more trouble."

WHAT was "well enough"?

"Well enough" was the savage beating that had occurred earlier in the day of a Negro mother and her veteran son, just returned from the Navy. The mother, joyful over her boy's return, had gone with him to a shop on the public square to get the small radio they had left for repair. They paid the charge, but found that the radio did not work. She, Mrs. Gladys Stevenson, made a bitter remark that she was compelled to pay though the radio was not fixed. The white clerk followed her out of the store and, on the sidewalk outside, slapped and kicked her.

James C. Stevenson, age nineteen, Navy veteran, had been thousands of miles across the seas since he volunteered at seventeen with his mother's permission. He had come back from a world-wide war of liberation to see his mother kicked and beaten on the sidewalk of his native town by a member of the "superior race." He knocked hell out of the white man with a punch worthy of Joe Louis and Dorie Miller rolled into one.

Thereupon mother and son were set upon by some of the passing white men about town. For them it was rather startling to see the white clerk bounce off of Jimmy Stevenson's fist into a plate glass window, crash through it and lie on the sidewalk bleeding from cuts caused by the breaking glass. Seeing the white men attack her young Navy man, Mrs. Stevenson ran to the drugstore and called to several people to help get a policeman, because her son was being beaten. The policemen came, including the police chief, took a look, saw it was between white and Negro, and began kicking and beating Jimmy and his mother, whose clothes were almost stripped from her.

The bleeding white clerk was taken to the hospital, the middle-aged Negro mother, hardly able to stand after the beating, was taken to jail, together with her son. Late in the afternoon they were released on bail and went, not to their home, but to a home of friends for privacy and quiet.

Before the hardware store closed that evening, a Negro customer overheard a white customer say, "We are going to hang two Negroes tonight. If I don't hang them Negroes, I hope somebody will put this rope around my neck." The Negro customer quickly slipped out of the store and went down to "Mink Slide" to give warning.

As darkness came on, messengers went from house to house and all lights in the Negro settlement were extinguished.

ON THE public square two of the orators continued to exhort the thirty or forty men who were there with rifles and pistols to "go into Mink Slide and get the Negroes. There is no martial law yet," they said, "so come on and get them now; didn't they shed our blood?" Uniformed policemen heard them, but said they were drunk, and did nothing. More men with rifles, some shotguns and pistols, came walking and in autos, making about fifty in all. The orators grew fervid, but still the little knots of white men with firearms just stood around and did not start the march to "Mink Slide."

It seems that the shutting out of the lights in the Negro section made them uneasy. It is possible also that they knew that a ring of young men of "Mink Slide" had posted themselves as sentries in the dark streets around the section, armed with some fourteen shotguns loaded with bird-shot, a few small pistols and two target rifles. The march on "Mink Slide" did not begin.

Four policemen got into an automobile, saying they were going down into "Mink Slide" to get Jimmy Stevenson and bring him up to the white section around the public square "for his own protection." Though Jimmy's home was with his mother in another part of the town, it was known that he had been invited by friends to come to the more populous Negro section to be more secure for the night.

A NEGRO employed by a phosphate mine or another plant in the suburbs, finishing his day's work after dark, came into town and, knowing nothing of what was going on, bought a ticket to the Jim Crow balcony of a movie theater. Surprised to find not a single other Negro in the theater, he became alarmed and left. Reaching the street he saw a white man get out of an automobile with a rifle, and a little further he saw another standing with a large pistol in his hand. The Negro broke into a run, headed down into "Mink Slide" and said that a mob was coming.

The four policemen in their car, with guns ready, approached the darkened Negro settlement, their headlights turned high to flood-light the blacked-out Negroes' homes and shops ahead.

There was an exchange of shots, and the four policemen, firing back at the Negroes' homes, drove hastily away, each of the four bleeding from bird-shot wounds.

The turning back of the policemen with this shotgun fire prevented the lynching of a veteran.

The seven hours gained was enough for Jimmy Stevenson to slip out of another side of town in a car with some friends and go—nobody knows where.

HUNDREDS of state highway policemen and members of the National Guard came into Columbia throughout the night, finally numbering 500. But they didn't go into "Mink Slide." All night they camped around the Negro section, waiting for daylight. At 5 AM

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they moved in with machine-guns, rifles and tommy-guns blazing. The local and nearby press tells frankly of the fury of the *uniformed* mob, wrecking two blocks of shops, stores and homes with machine-gun fire, then entering houses, smashing tables, chairs, doors, windows, store fixtures, in order, as the newspapers say with satisfaction, to make the Negro section uninhabitable.

More than 100 Negroes were placed under arrest, the police in frank naivete explaining that the reason for arrest of many was that they are obviously leaders of the community.

About fifty or seventy-five were given the "third degree" for several nights and days.

On the fourth day, three young men were being put through the ordeal to extort something to use as "evidence" for the indictment. Deputy sheriffs and policemen placed several loaded firearms within reach of the three while they were driven further and further toward desperation. The police stood around with tommy-guns. According to the police statement, one of the young men finally seized a gun and fired at a deputy sheriff, inflicting a slight flesh wound on his arm. Whether that is true or not, the police instantly riddled the three young men with their tommy-guns.

Yet, strangely, after being shot full of bullets, the three young Negroes were still alive. So the two who were most severely wounded were not taken to the local hospital, but put into a car, supposedly an ambulance, and driven for an hour and a half toward Nashville until they died.

So the police lynching did bear fruit.

Now comes the "dry" lynching—by the grand jury. It happened that a new grand jury was scheduled to be selected on the very Monday that the bloody struggle began. Everyone knew the chief business of this grand jury would be the sharp and bloody "race" struggle.

The new grand jury was selected accordingly. Twelve white men.

The hideous farce of indictment and trial of a large number of Negroes, solely by white men, in a method reminiscent of the trials of slaves before the Civil War and in complete defiance of the Civil War Amendments of the Constitution, will follow.

Now comes the struggle which will enlist more and more allies and swell into a tide that cannot be stopped until the victory is won.

It must be a point of honor for all of the labor movement and every progressive force in the world that there shall be not one single additional victim among the Negro people of Columbia beyond the two who have been murdered.

I HAVE never seen James C. Stevenson, Navy veteran, age nineteen. But he stands in the center of the picture and symbolizes the whole character of the event and the nature of the campaign that is bound to follow, the quality of the great human forces that will come to the defense of the intended victims of the police lynching.

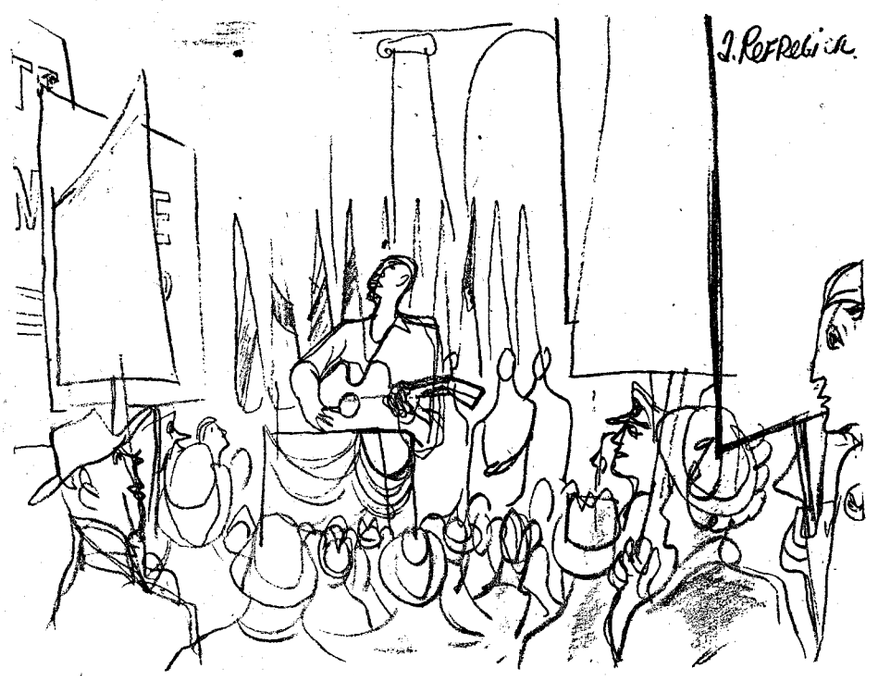
The cowardly commercial press already senses this, and has hardly dared to mention Stevenson's name. Newspaper editors deliberately throw a screen of vagueness around every reference to the person who is the very center of the affair. To them he is just an anonymous Negro. The *Daily Herald* of Columbia, for example, refers to his mother and him as "a Negro woman *and a man who said he was her son.*" This apparent idiocy is necessary to obscure the fact that a courageous young Navy veteran defended his mother. "It's a wise man who knoweth his own father," but everyone knows his mother.

The press is touting the white clerk who assaulted the middle-aged Mrs. Stevenson as "William ('Billy') Fleming, twenty-eight, discharged Army veteran," in the hope that this will obscure the character of the struggle that is going to rally hundreds of thousands of veterans to defend Jimmy Stevenson.

Let those who will, in the name of the veterans, defend the beating of an aged mother. The rest of the world—for the honor of the American veterans—must defend the veteran son who defended his mother.

The beating of a Negro mother on the street by a member of the "superior race" and the coming of her son to her rescue sums up the saga of a people finding its way out of slavery. This is the way it will be seen all around the world—in every village of China and India and Africa, where people will tell how Jimmy Stevenson came to the defense of his mother, and will say it symbolizes the turning point of history for the American part of a thousand million oppressed people.

Every phase of the inferior position imposed upon the Negro people must be raised in the great public struggle that must come in this case—including every aspect of segregation, separate schools, Jim Crow cars, exclusion from hospitals. Separation itself must be attacked, and not merely what is hypocritically called "equal, though separate, facilities." Segregation is the beginning of lynching. Every incident of this brutal case must be made a part of the basis for a fight that will ring around the world and give new vigor to the struggle in every Southern town and throughout the Southern countryside to sweep away the whole Jim Crow relic of human slavery.



Josh White sings in Union Square at the Communist Party's "Win the Peace" Rally, March 7, 1946. Sketch by Anton Refregier.

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Act Against Lynching!

Thousands of Negro and white Americans gathered in the rain in New York, last week, but their hearts were afire with indignation, with anger, with determination. The events in Columbia, Tenn., and in Freeport, L. I.—where Negroes were lynched by the "law"—murdered in the classic Gestapo fashion—had brought them together from all parts of the metropolis.

They were determined to fight this expression of increasing reaction in this country; determined to exercise their obligations to democracy, to the Negro people—to our nation. Elsewhere throughout America similar actions were beginning. Our people will not take these fascist brutalities lying down; they know that what happens to one segment of our people will spread, like a plague, to harm every group of our nation. And without exception. They know what happened in Columbia, and in Freeport, is an expression at home of the imperialistic policy abroad; that the men at the controls, those whose first loyalty is to the vast monopolies, are out to rule the world. And to do so the "American Century" must begin at home—by terrorizing, by atomizing, by dividing the democratic hosts of our land. Thus the words of a Bilbo, of a Taft, of a Vandenberg—are translated into deed in a thousand diverse ways by reactionary individuals and groups at the grass-roots of the country.

Robert Minor's article shows the bestiality of the police in Tennessee. Since that was written new developments have occurred. Twelve Negroes are being held on charges: nine for "attempt to commit murder" and three for "carrying concealed weapons." The white policemen who killed the two Negroes and whose identity is known are still at large. The scene is set to follow the inital police lynchings with the legal lynching of twelve more Negroes. In Freeport L. I., in the great state of New York, the similar police lynching of two Negro veterans is not even being investigated.

Powerful pressure of the people must be generated to bring the lynchers to justice and to guarantee the Negro people full protection of the law and equal enjoyment of civil rights in all parts of the country. New Yorkers took the lead in organizing scores of protest meetings, among them the large gathering in Union Square called by the Communist Party.

Delegations from trade unions, local communities, churches and civil societies are going to Albany demanding a special grand jury and a special prosecutor to investigate and punish those guilty of the Freeport killings. The growing New York activities include the demand for the investigation of the Columbia lynchings. Telegrams are being sent to the Department of Justice demanding federal investigation and speedy punishment of the killers and wreckers of the Negro community of "Mink Slide."

Both Freeport and Columbia are ominous events of nationwide significance and demand nationwide action. A great movement is beginning! Action is being taken by the NAACP, the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, the Chicago Civil Liberties Committee, the New York branch of the Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions, the International Labor Defense, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers and the National Negro Congress. This must be joined by other national and local organizations of labor and the people. Demands for investigation and action should be sent to the President as well as to the Department of Justice.

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JIM CROW IN KHAKI

By LAWRENCE GELLERT

A "LADY" walked up to a United States Army soldier guarding the Post gate. "You should be in overalls instead of disgracing that uniform," she screamed and deliberately spat into his face. Was she arrested and punished? No. Was the local population warned by the military authorities against repetition of the insult? Of course not. You see the soldier was a Negro. And it happened in the State of Georgia. Post commanders had instructions to respect local customs and prejudices to the letter.

Again the same state, but another encampment: We were seated in the recreation hall of a Negro battalion. Men off duty lolled around. Some thumbed through newspapers, magazines or letters from home. One was fiddling with the knob of a radio, from which suddenly boomed forth, "And I promise you that if I'm elected there will be no n—— seated in any of our institutions of higher learning. My opponent says he hasn't yet studied the problem. I say it needs no studying. . . ." Here the soldier snapped it shut, exclaiming, "Good God Almighty, if that there Hitler man want just this here State of Georgia, I call this war off and surrenders right now." "Amen, brother" added another, "and we throw in Mississippi and Alabama too."

If such an insult against any of our armed forces had been made in an occupied enemy country, the politician's life and career might have been very short-lived indeed. But in Georgia the lily-white gentleman walked right into the governor's chair.

IN CAMP WOLTERS, Texas, a spirited Negro soldier from Harlem brought charges against his lieutenant, alleging that he had insulted him with the epithet, "dirty n——." The following repartee ensued at the hearing:

"You bathe regularly?"

"Yessir."

"You keep your clothes clean?"

"Yessir."

"Your bed and quarters are always well aired?"

"Yessir."

"I'll have to speak to your lieutenant against any further reflection on your cleanliness. That's all."

"But he called me a dirty n——, sir."

"Oh that. Merely a nickname. You'll have to get used to it down here. Dismissed."

A NEGRO hostess answering the phone promised to send six Negro soldiers over to the white service club to clean up after a dance. When she'd hung up the receiver, she turned to me and asked, "What do you suppose would happen if after our dance next Friday night, I should call up the C. Q. and ask him to send over six white boys to clean up our club here?"

LATE one night I grabbed a bus circling Keesler Field in Mississippi. I was already aboard and seated when I discovered it was the Negro bus. When the vehicle approached the exit, lights were turned on and an MP came aboard to check passes. When he saw me he laughed, leaned out of the window and called a local policeman. "Look, Jack," he yelled, "see what we got here on the n—— bus." The yokel swaggered over, took a long look at me. "Hell," he said. "I'll be Goddamned if you ain't the whitest-lookin' n—— I ever saw. But you couldn't fool me. I can smell 'em every time." When we'd passed through the gate on our way to Biloxi, the boy seated next to me remarked, "Yeh, that's some bloodhound! He don't see so good and he smell real bad." The laughter added to the usual rocking of the antiquated, broken-down vehicle "reserved for colored only."

A GROUP of day-old rookies (white) were welcomed at Gulfport, Miss. The colonel, informally seated on a desk, with feet swinging back and forth, reeled off the customary pep talk, adding, "And one thing more. I hate to have to tell you this. However, soldiers cannot talk back. They must obey. I have my orders. And I merely relay them to you. When you see a n—— in an officer's uniform, you salute. I don't mean for you to salute the n——. Salute

This Week's Rankest

"This new bill I'm proposing is a honey—it makes all union members subject to poll tax."

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Payoff

When we were working, working
We walked with payday feet
Sunlight sat on our porch swing
And Presidents lived down the street

When we were working, working
We washed our face in sweat
Blow the whistle, shut the gate
And pay off each old debt

Now that we're not working
Broken houses seem to grin
And Hooverville is calling—
Come on back and move right in

Now our days have lonesome hands
Clouds fill up the skies
As long as the stores have bread
We won't feed the kids mud pies

Cross their hearts and double cross
Some will kill for money
Some will lock our jobs away
And paint their tongues with honey

Tell them to bring us jobs
And never mind the lies
We've got sixty million hearts
And a payoff in our eyes

FLOYD WALLACE.

the uniform. Up in Washington they think they can make an officer and a gentleman out of a n——. I have my own opinion, as you have yours, each and every one of you. But you're in the Army now. You must obey orders. When you see a n—— in an officer's uniform, you must salute it . . . remember that."

IT HAPPENED in connection with an advertising program of a large soft drink manufacturer. Every soldier was privileged to send home a "Voice Letter" —a recording of his voice to the folks back home. The company was intent only on creating good will and wider sales for its product. The money the Negro soldier made was as good as that of the whites. So the recording equipment was scheduled for operation at the Negro recreation hall at Fort Bliss, Texas.

A white lieutenant in charge of Negro troops could hardly wait. "N——s writing letters on phonograph records would be more fun than a barrel of monkeys." He wouldn't miss the event for the world. He'd invite some Northern officers from the other side of camp to attend the "show."

The appointed night the gentry turned out early and in numbers. While they awaited the entertainers' arrival, the obliging lieutenant kept up a chatter of anecdotes of the Amos and Andy genre. Except for a few stragglers in and out of the hall, the soldiers failed to put in an appearance. The lieutenant had completely exhausted his store of "darkie" tales. They were on the verge of leaving, when marching feet sounded on the gravel walk outside. Troops entered the hall single file, went up the aisle and filled row after row of wooden benches. The last dozen or so continued to march right up to the platform. Here they formed a line, each awaiting his turn on the machine.

The first man stepped up to the "mike." He talked extemporaneously. He addressed his wife much in the manner of the better-educated soldier, white or black. The second soldier, an ordained minister, used a disk to report to his parishioners on Army life generally . . . a clever and very well-chosen and delivered digest. The third wrote to his brother in the Air Forces at Tuskegee University. He admonished him to do his best in spite of prejudice. He understood, he said, that no ground crews were available for them. That was evidently a ruse to keep him and his fellows from going aloft. But despite all the prejudice against Negro flyers, he must see it through. When he did finally take a plane up, he must remember the hopes of his race would be flying way up there in the clouds with him. . . . And so it went, half a dozen letters in a row, all scholarly, in well-turned phrases and good taste, with never a "dis" or a "dat" and frequently interspersed with thinly-veiled jabs at race prejudice.

The Southern white lieutenant could contain himself no longer. He turned in his seat, pointed to a soldier behind him whom he evidently recognized as the "right" kind for the minstrel show. "You there boy, go up there and write something to your fat, hot mamma, with the battle-axe hips. You know all about jelly roll and Mojaw hams and things like that."

The boy remained seated. "Sorry, suh," he said simply, "I don't know no such woman like that."

The "show" was a complete bust. The gentlemen fled. Later when the boys had laughed themselves into the aisles, one of them recalled ruefully, "That lieutenant looked mad enough to weigh a ton. He bound to take it out of your hide tomorrow, I'll bet."

AT A post near Jacksonville, Fla., a Negro battalion had the highest record of any for target practice, drill, etc. I was listening to the commanding Southern white officer explain, lest I draw the wrong conclusions. "You know," said he, "the Negro has no individuality. He works best in a mass when led by white officers who are merely the counterparts of the overseers back in slave days." I cited the general belief that the superiority of our troops over the Nazis was in their ability to think and act for themselves. "Oh, that is true," he admitted. "But only in respect to the white man. The n—— is different. He is not like us."

And yet, despite all this abuse, the Negro soldier did his part in knocking Hitler into a cocked hat. As a Negro top sergeant put it, "Boy, I made believe all them Germans was just crackers from Georgia. And didn't we give 'em hell!"

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To a Carolina Cotton Mill

Houses stand on the ever-groping earth
Here on thin stilts above the red clay
On eroded banks above the red river
That runs like the street in a gully
Worn from the red sandy clay

Heavy with its burden of vermilion
The river sounds with the beat of rain
Flooded to crest with the blood of earth
Draining the highlands down to the plain
Softly rushing under the rain

Tired strands of sparse dry grass
Edge crispened and faded ponds of earth
Till in the slow-filling glut of pools
Green sleeping spreads to renew birth
Among the drowned leaves of earth

Below rain-darkened copper eaves
Below prim Gothic towers dully glow
Squares of wet glass divided by steel
On which streams silently swell and go
Seaming briefly the bluish glow

In the flooding darkness of the yard
Worn by the dripping lash of rain
Straight and white as plain skeletal bone
Gleaming with windows' reflected stain
Stands a sign in the rain

A white wood cross separates them neatly
Names laned into streams as a question died
On the same dark earth the same hard death
When names were blood that flowed beside
Bodies to forget what never died.

PAUL B. GOODMAN.

Now

(*Memorial to the Victims of Fascism*)

When someone's brother husband father
stood daily bound before the unerring rifles
crumbling to limp bundles
under noon's eye staring—

when the moon was accessory to the Gestapo,
the road perhaps a one way road—
when heroism had become so common,
the native daily act of thousands

now in this light of day, this happy summer light,
now in this night wrapping our cities and our prairie farms,
now on this earth, on our world island now
whether the planet tilt its towns into light's flood
new-limning towery shaft or obscure avenue,
or night return the brooding of the wild
the grass the trees and shade that take all back
that was man's day

we shall remember this. We shall remember.

RAY SMITH.

The Guns of Grief

Guns of grief make sound incessant
as from their shore, cities beleaguered hear
and those waking at midnight turn and stare
with animal eyes into a towering present

Entrapped as between boulders while blood cries
where shall I go, where shall I run and hide
be changed to rain, dissolve among the hills—
and the guns loom outside.

ELIZABETH TRAVERS.

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WORKINGMEN'S PARIS: 1871

By SAMUEL BERNSTEIN

Two major anniversaries occur this month. On March 14, 1883 *there died in London Karl Marx, founder of scientific socialism and greatest leader of the international working class in the nineteenth century. On March* 18, *seventy-five years ago, there was born the first workers' government in history, the Paris Commune. Marx is inseparably linked to the Commune through his immortal defense of it in his* "The Civil War in France." *Though the historic circumstances have altered in so many ways, there are important parallels between the struggle of the Commune against the French ruling class and its Prussian ally and the resistance of the French people to the Nazi invaders and the collaborationist bourgeoisie.*

For this double anniversary we are publishing this article which is a summary of part of a chapter from a forthcoming book on the history of socialism in France. Mr. Bernstein is an editor of "Science and Society."

"MEN make their own history," says Marx in the opening page of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, "but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past." The Paris workers learned this truth after rising to power in the French capital on March 18, 1871, but they could not turn circumstances to their advantage. From the Second Empire they had inherited economic and psychological situations which could not be changed overnight. The costly Franco-Prussian War had been fought, in which Imperial generals had surrendered entire armies in the hope of wrecking the republic that had risen on the ruins of the Empire. The upper bourgeoisie, according to Louis Blanqui, the veteran revolutionist, preferred "the King of Prussia to the republic. With him, it will at least have social, if not political power."

In contrast to the treason and ineptness of French generals, the capital had successfully resisted the invader. Paris had not capitulated; it was surrendered. The Government of National Defense, which had slid into the vacant seat of the Empire, and which Marx called a government of National Defection, preferred a negotiated peace to a war of national liberation such as the Jacobins had fought in 1793. The French negotiators sacrificed Alsace-Lorraine and wounded Parisian patriotism by permitting the Prussians to occupy a section of the capital. The war had caused unemployment, lessened the food supply and irritated people against those responsible for the hardships. It had also weakened labor's organizations, among them the International Workingmen's Association (First International) in France.

Paris was a serious challenge to the government, headed by Adolphe Thiers, which had set up business in Versailles. Here sat a National Assembly, elected in February 1871, and dominated by a defeatist, Paris-hating, squirely, monarchist majority. The Parisians, on the other hand, had their arms and a National Guard that was generaled by radicals—Jacobins, Proudhonians, Blanquists, even four members of the First International. The first represented revolutionary relics. The second were the "credit-men" who believed that a people's bank, replacing the financiers, would preserve the independence of shopkeepers and artisans. Proudhonians formed the bulk of the leadership in the First International in France. The third were men of action, political revolutionists, disciples of their martyred leader, Blanqui.

On the morning of March 18, 1871, Thiers' government tried to disarm the capital. When his generals found their troops unreliable, surrounded by and fraternizing with the armed people, they ordered a retreat to Versailles.

The Central Committee of the National Guard discovered it was the authority in Paris. Unaware of the historical significance of the event, it hesitated, hoped for compromise, tolerated enemies, and hastened to appeal to the ballot by calling for an election of a government instead of continuing in power. The chosen communal council was a workers' government, at once a legislative, administrative and executive body. The Paris Commune was a democracy without parliamentarism.

Here is not the place to examine the mistakes of the Commune. Suffice it to say that during its seventy-two days of life, it was weakened by many factors. The principal ones were factional disputes, Proudhonist respect for the Bank of France and isolation from the rest of France. Its existence was both a lesson and an example; a lesson, because it demonstrated that a revolution could not move forward on anachronisms; and an example, because it exhibited a new type of democracy in action.

Enemies were convinced that the workers' government had been engineered by the International. This was true only in the sense that the Commune was "unquestionably the intellectual child of the International," as Engels wrote to F. A. Sorge. It was public knowledge that the International Workingmen's Association had done everything in its power to persuade the Parisians not to upset the republic.

Once Paris had resumed its revolutionary role and the International had come to its defense, reaction united in a crusade against insurgents and Internationalists. Bismarck released French prisoners of war to be used by Thiers against Frenchmen, and German troops, stationed not far from the capital, "watched the moment to intervene," as one observer remarked, should the Communards gain the upper hand.

FROM the very beginning of the conflict, the General Council of the International in London had contact with its Parisian Federation. The Council's principal agents in Paris were: Auguste Serraillier, a shoemaker, a member of the General Council, later elected to the Paris Commune; Paul Lafargue, son-in-law of Marx; and Elizabeth Dmitrieva, formerly Marx's private secretary, organizer of thousands of Parisian women for the defense of the Commune. Other Communards and Internationalists, like Eugene Varlin and Leo Franckel, sought Marx's advice about reforms. For example, Franckel's letter of March 30, 1871, unknown to English readers, said in part: "If we could achieve a radical change in social relations, the Revolution of March 18 would be the most fruitful revolution history has hitherto recorded. . . . Consequently we must attain this objective at any cost. Your advice on the social reforms we should

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introduce will be extremely valuable to our committee."

The unpublished minutes of the General Council show that it was well abreast of events in Paris in the first month of the Commune. Before departing for the French capital, Serraillier kept the Council posted on political developments. For example, on March 21, he reported that enemies were attributing to Marx letters he had never written, and linking the International to a grand chief in Berlin. Three weeks later Engels spoke before the Council on the military situation. As long as the Central Committee was the power "things went well," he declared, "but a change set in after the elections of the Commune." The opinion of Engels, as the tailor George Eccarius, secretary to the Council, summed it up, was that "the time for action against Versailles had been when it was weak, but that opportunity had been lost; and now it seemed that Versailles was getting the upper hand and driving the Parisians back. People would not put up long with being led to defeat." Engels thought the Communards were losing ground, spending ammunition and consuming provisions. He was certain, however, that "they could not be starved into submission as long as one side of Paris was open and Jules Favre [Foreign Minister at Versailles] refused the aid of the Prussian." Engels ventured the prediction that the war would not terminate as rapidly as in June 1848, for the 200,000 Parisian workers were "far better organized than in any former insurrection."

THE General Council, and Marx in particular, devoted themselves to the fight against the lies and calumnies which the European press was spreading about the International and the Commune. People were fed the most horrible tales. Even Engels' old mother heard of them and deplored that her son was party to that "red gang." She attributed the wicked conduct of her fifty-one-year-old boy to his satanic friend, Marx. The latter, who read and clipped from the European newspapers, called the attention of the Council to the infamous role of the press, and especially of the English. The minutes of June 6, 1871, reported his words as follows: "The English press acted as police and blood-hounds for Thiers. Slanders against the Commune and against the International were invented to serve his bloody policy. The press knew full well the objects and principles of the International. It had given reports of the prosecutions against it in Paris under the Empire. It had had representatives at the various congresses held by the Association and had reported their proceedings, and yet it circulated reports to the effect that the Association included the Fenian brotherhood, the Carbonari (ceased to exist in 1830), the Marianne (ditto in 1854), and other secret societies . . . These things were simply invented to justify any action against the International. The upper classes were afraid of the principles of the International."

THE General Council inspired an international agitation in favor of the Commune. Mass meetings in Germany, Italy, Switzerland and America endorsed the principles of the International and expressed complete agreement with the Communards. In England the Council participated in republican meetings which were induced to vote resolutions in defense of the Parisian combatants. On March 28, it adopted Marx's proposal to address a manifesto "to the people of Paris," and commissioned Marx to write it. However, the minutes of the next meeting state that "in consequence of the occurrences in Paris citizen Marx thought the issuing of an address now would be out of place." On April 25, Marx promised his colleagues that the manifesto would be ready for the next meeting. But on May 2, Engels reported that Marx had been obliged to leave town on account of ill health. On May 23, Marx informed the General Council that he was still engaged in preparing the "address." He submitted it May 30, and the Council adopted it without discussion. One thousand copies were published under the title, *Address on the Civil War in France*.

Karl Marx was one of the stoutest champions of the cause of the Commune. His advice to the Parisian workers in September 1870, to utilize "the opportunities of republican liberty for the work of their own class organization" could not be followed. Forced into a historical situation from which there was no escape, they became the governing class in the capital and gave to the world an example of heroism. "What elasticity, what historical initiative, what a capacity for sacrifice in these Parisians," Marx wrote to Kugelmann. "History has no like example of a like greatness." While British trade-union leaders in the General Council showed calculated coolness to the struggling Parisians and objected to having their names affixed to the *Address*, Marx fought the lies in the press, wrote articles in behalf of the Communards, penned "several hundred letters . . . to every corner of the world in which we have branches," as he informed Franckel, and advised the workers' government in Paris on labor legislation. Marx's vindication of the Commune must have been effective, for he was at once elevated from comparative obscurity to "the best calumniated and the most menaced man in London," he wrote to Kugelmann. "That really does one good after a tedious twenty-years' idyll in my den." He was called a "monster" and an enemy of humanity. He was metamorphosed into "the private secretary of Bismarck," regarded as the grand chief of the International residing in Berlin, and as the ringleader of a conspiracy to plunder France and Europe. Marx's name was so well advertised that it caused the Czarist secret police to vibrate with nervousness.

MEANWHILE Marx worked and suffered. "You cannot imagine how the events in France have distressed my husband, daughters, and all of us," wrote Jenny Marx to Kugelmann. With his usual thoroughness Marx read everything he could find on the Commune and collected documentary evidence for the manifesto the General Council had instructed him to write. According to the unpublished minutes of May 23, he explained that ill health had prevented him from finishing it. Referring to the last phase of the struggle in Paris, Marx "was afraid the end was near." He was convinced that "if the Commune was beaten, the struggle would only be deferred. The principles of the Commune were eternal and could not be crushed. They would assert themselves again and again until the working classes were emancipated. The Commune of Paris was being crushed by the aid of the Prussians; they were acting as the gendarme for Thiers. The plot for its destruction was concocted between Bismarck, Thiers and Favre. . . . It was only the old story. The upper classes always united to keep down the working class."

Marx completed the *Address on the Civil War in France* while Versailles troops were wreaking vengeance on the Communards. Writing in this atmosphere, he did not aim to produce a historical critique of the Commune, but a passionate defense of its combatants, fighting the battle for humanity. The result was perhaps the greatest polemic

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he ever composed and the most brilliant contribution in the vast literature on the Paris Commune. Again, as in *The Class Struggles in France* and in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx dissected a complex historical period and extracted from it the crucial quality. Prefacing the main part of the ***Address*** with brief portraits of the Versailles leaders, which a Daumier might have sketched, he summarized the events that culminated in the civil war, alluded to the Central Committee's decisive mistakes, contrasted the barbarism of Versailles with the humanitarianism of Paris, and revealed the "true secret" of the Commune. "It was essentially a working class government, the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labor." The Commune was "to serve as a lever for uprooting the economical foundations upon which rests the existence of classes, and therefore of class rule." The Commune was "the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society," and "the bold champion of the emancipation of labor, emphatically international." That was why it "annexed to France the working people all over the world."

The Commune was not expected to introduce socialism with a magic wand for: "The working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready-made utopias to introduce *par decret du peuple*. They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant."

Marx contrasted "working, thinking, bleeding Paris" with the anti-national Versailles "assembly of the ghouls of all defunct regimes," headed by "a senile mountebank" and "propped up to the semblance of life by nothing but the swords of the generals of Louis Bonaparte." After affirming the ties between the International and the Commune, Marx concluded:

"Workingmen's Paris, with its Commune, will be for ever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators, history has already nailed to that eternal pillory from which all the prayers of the priest will not avail to redeem them."

How was the *Address* received? British trade union leaders, finding it too radical, resigned from the International. Lafargue, however, was enthusiastic. "I must tell you," he wrote to Marx from a village in the Pyrenees, "that of all that I have read by you, this is the most vigorous. You have succeeded in making all popular chords vibrate." The English bourgeois press at first maintained a dead silence. In the middle of June, as if a signal had been given, the uproar began. Denunciations, citations out of context, and falsifying articles were published in all of the leading newspapers. "All London spoke only of us," Engels informed Wilhelm Liebknecht, father of Karl. "Naturally, it was all yelling and screaming. So much the better." Kugelmann read in a letter from Marx that the *Address* was making "the devil of a noise."

The heavy toll of 25,000 men, women and children among Communards, killed in battle or after, did not appease vindictive Versailles. Historians of the Commune have estimated that after the blood-letting 38,568 arrests were made, among

(*Continued on page* 31)

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ART IS A WEAPON

By JOHN HOWARD LAWSON

DURING recent months, NEW MASSES has published a number of articles on the social function of the writer. The discussion is of unusual interest, because it indicates the transitional phase through which our culture is passing, which in turn is a reflection of social and political changes in the life of the American people and in world relationships.

Unfortunately much of the discussion has been conducted in a rather rarefied aesthetic atmosphere and not in terms of immediate political realities. The article by Albert Maltz (NM, Feb. 12, 1946) is an extreme example of the tendency to deal with art (and the desires and illusions of the artist) subjectively, without reference to the external events and forces which are the occasion for the discussion and the only frame of reference by which it can be given relevance and meaning. In asserting that the writer is obligated only to portray "abiding truths" and to serve "a broad philosophic or emotional humanism," Maltz explicitly rejects the contemporary responsibility of the artist. He also rejects, less explicitly but nonetheless sweepingly, the fundamental principles of Marxism.

Marxism regards all of life and nature as a continuous process of flux and change, decay and growth. Everything is transient; everything is in motion; everything is becoming. Marxism rejects the assumption of idealist philosophy that thought is a thing-in-itself, a "spiritual" reality that transcends the environment. Thought is an integral part of practical, human activity. Marx wrote in the second thesis on Feuerbach: "The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, i.e., the 'this-sidedness' of his thinking."

The slogan *Art is a weapon* expresses this basic truth. A weapon is used in conflict. The history of society is the history of class struggles. Art, then, serves the interest of a class; it is a weapon in the hands of one class or another. Maltz seems to accept this concept in general. He agrees that "It is broadly—not always specifically—true to say that works of art have been, and can be, weapons in men's thinking, and therefore in the struggle of social classes —either on the side of humanity's progress or on the side of reaction." The confusing and vacillating quality of this statement lies in the contrast between what is "broadly" and "specifically" true, and in the phrase "have been, and can be. . . ." Are we to assume that there are works of art which do not "specifically" serve the interests of classes and are therefore outside and above the class struggle?

As we proceed, it becomes apparent that this is precisely what Maltz means. He castigates "the writer who works to serve an immediate political purpose —whose desire is to win friends for some political action or point of view." The immediate impact of politics expresses the pressure of class interests. If the "abiding truths" to which the writer dedicates his talent are unrelated to a "current and transient political tactic," they are unrelated to the class struggle which is the driving force of change, of all that is current and transient, in a given historical situation.

One cannot understand any form of cultural expression without examining the specific social circumstances out of which it arises and which determine its purpose and meaning. This is true of a novel, a painting, a symphony or a critical article. We cannot divorce the views expressed by Maltz from the historical moment he selects for the presentation of these views. He writes at a time of decisive struggle. The democratic victories achieved in the Second World War are threatened by the still powerful forces of imperialism and reaction, which are especially strong in the United States. The American working class is achieving increasingly militant leadership in the people's movement to safeguard peace, jobs and security. Can we regard it as merely an oversight that Maltz does not say one word about this struggle, or suggest that the writer has any connection with the workers or their allies, or any obligation to take sides in the conflict? His article is entitled: "What Shall We Ask of Writers?" Obviously, he does not ask them to identify themselves with the working class.

MALTZ's inability to place the problem of the artist in its historical and social context is especially evident in his reference to Engels' estimate of Balzac. The letter written to Miss Harkness in 1888, which Maltz paraphrases inaccurately, is a brief masterpiece of Marxist literary analysis. Engels studies Balzac in the concrete relationships of his time; he points out that the *Comedie Humaine* offers "a most realistic history of French 'society,' describing, chronicle-fashion, almost year by year from 1816 to 1848, the ever-increasing pressure of the rising bourgeoisie upon the society of nobles that established itself after 1815 . . . around this central picture he groups a complete history of French society from which, even in economic details (for instance, the rearrangement of real and private property after the French Revolution) I have learned more than from all the professional historians, economists and statisticians of the period together."

Balzac was a legitimist. His love of the old aristocracy motivated his hatred of the rising class of capitalists; his portrayal of a society in which everything was subordinated to greed and lust for power served as an antidote to the romantic liberalism of the early nineteenth century. Engels points out that Balzac's "sympathies are with the class that is doomed to extinction." But it was also true of Balzac that he was "compelled to go against his own class sympathies and political prejudices, that he saw the necessity of the downfall of his favorite nobles and described them as people deserving no better fate."

Engels sees Balzac as a man alive, struggling to cut the web of contradictions in which he finds himself entangled, creating out of the intensity of the struggle. Maltz sees Balzac as a man who is permanently and comfortably divided into two separate entities: the reactionary citizen and the observant artist occupy the same skin; the citizen votes and the artist writes and neither of them interferes with the other.

It is true that a split personality is characteristic of the development of culture under capitalism, reflecting the ambiguity of the intellectual's class position and the contradictions that are inherent in the system. Maltz accepts this dualism as a permanent aesthetic principle, an attribute of the creative personality. The principle as Maltz projects it is so unaffected by historical change that it applies in exactly the same way to Balzac in the eighteen-forties or to James T.

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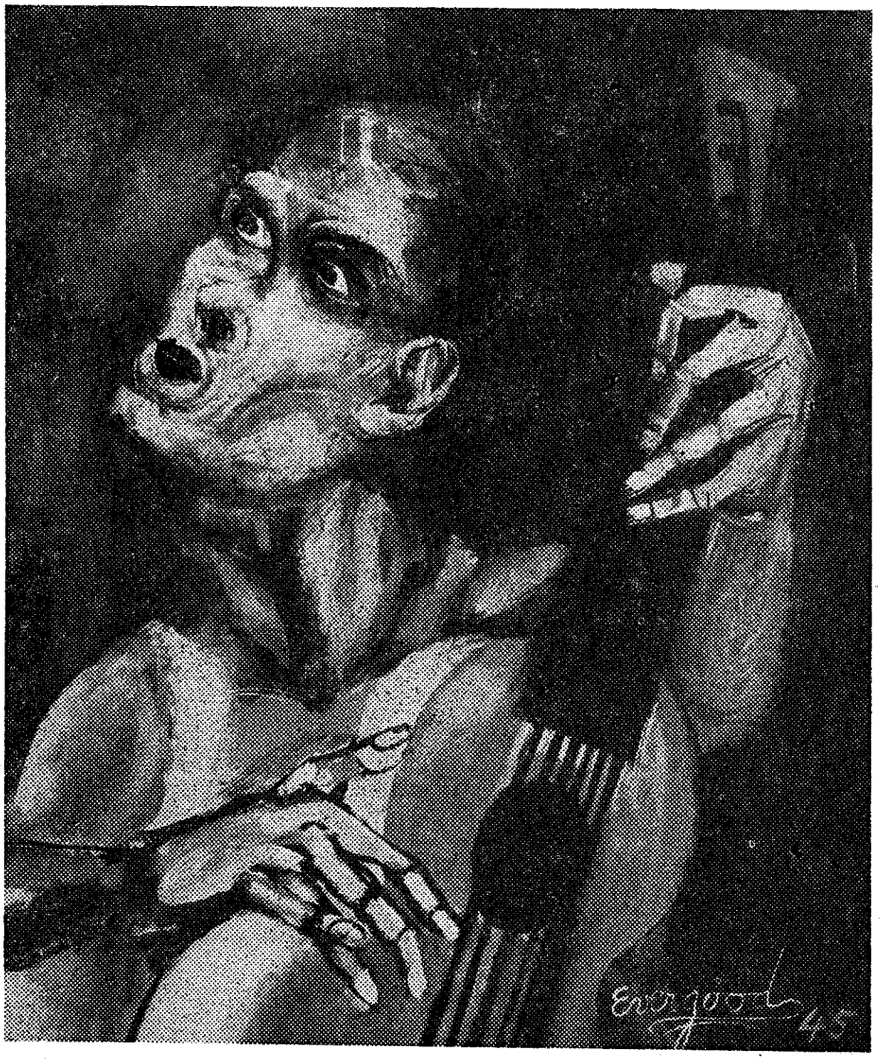
Farrell and Richard Wright a century later.

The method of historical materialism provides a key to the understanding of cultural evolution as an integral part of the movement of history. The period from the European revolutions of 1848 to the troubled beginnings of 1946 has witnessed a world-wide transformation of productive forces and relationships. The intellectual leaders of the early nineteenth century, standing at the threshold of the new epoch, tended either to view the change ideally as the dawn of a period of infinite progress and well-being, or to see only the destructive and anti-social aspects of emergent capitalism. A few of the most profound thinkers of the time, notably Hegel, Goethe and Balzac, began to explore social history as a dialectical process, and to suggest, at least tentatively and in an abstract and inverted form, that the contradictions in society are historically conditioned. Balzac is explicit in his use of the method of dialectics: "There is nothing absolute in man"; life is governed by the "law of contradictions and contrasts."

AFTER the social convulsions that began in 1848 and ended with the defeat of the Paris Commune, the growth of industrialism and the rise of the working class resolved the complex conflicts of the earlier period into a struggle between capital and labor in which control of the means of production was ultimately at stake. Marx and Engels analyzed the historical meaning of this struggle and predicted its inevitable outcome. But culture remained the property of the dominant class. It was no longer possible for the artist to use his art as a weapon in the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the old aristocracy. Nor was it possible to ignore the poverty and suffering that were inherent in the expanding capitalist economy. The socially conscious artist saw that humanity paid a heavy price for industrial expansion; he saw the clouds of war darkening the skies. But his culture—the training and background that enabled him to be an artist—was so enthralled in class allegiance and prejudices that it prevented any contact with the workers or recognition of the role of labor in the evolution of society.



"Night Club Entertainer," oil by Philip Evergood.

The intellectual life of the later nineteenth century, especially in the most advanced capitalist countries, England and the United States, was one-sided and restricted in social scope. Class taboos excluded the work of Marx and Engels from the realm of "culture"; many of the most thoughtful and creative people of the time, people who were genuinely seeking to explore the social usefulness, the "this-sidedness," of culture—were unaware of the existence of Marxist theory. Henry Adams, who reflects the intellectual climate of his age with remarkable fidelity, says of his years at Harvard: "He could not afterwards remember to have heard the name of Karl Marx mentioned, or the title of 'Capital'." When Adams went to England in 1858, he travelled from Liverpool to London through Birmingham and the Black District; he tells of the "dense, smoky impenetrable darkness" that hung over the district; "the revelation of an unknown society of the pit—made a boy uncomfortable, though he had no idea that Karl Marx was standing there waiting for him. . . . The Black District was a practical education, but it was infinitely far in the distance. The boy ran away from it, as he ran away from everything he disliked." Adams, like most of the thinkers of his period, accepted Darwinism, but he never undertook the study of Marx.

The most decisive literary achievements and influences of the later nineteenth century did not come from the countries of maximum bourgeois development, but from Russia and Scandinavia. Lenin points to the significance of Tolstoy's work in relation to the social development that preceded the revolution of 1905: "One of the principle characteristic traits of our revolution is the fact that it was a bourgeois *peasant* revolution in an epoch when capitalism had attained an extremely high degree of development throughout the world, and a comparatively high degree in Russia. . . . In the works of Tolstoy are expressed the strength and weakness, the power and narrowness of the mass movement, and particularly of the peasant movement.

"With tremendous force and sincerity, Tolstoy castigated the ruling classes. With supreme clarity he exposed the inner lie of all the institutions maintain-

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ing present-day society: the Church, the courts, militarism, 'legal' matrimony, bourgeois science. Yet his teaching came into complete conflict with the life, the work and struggle of the gravediggers of the present system, the proletariat. . . . Through his lips spoke the masses of the Russian people, those millions of men who had *already* come to hate the masters of today, but who had *not yet* reached the point of waging a conscious, consistent, definite, irreconcilable struggle against them."

In a different way, Dostoevsky achieved a powerful portrayal of a disintegrating and corrupt society. In Norway, Ibsen analyzed the rotten structure of middle class family life under the comparatively "idyllic" conditions of small communities on the fringe of industrial civilization.

THESE factors explain the profound influence that Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Ibsen exerted on European and American thought. They stimulated social realism within the framework of existent property relationships, and without challenging the fundamental assumptions of class dominance in an industrial society. Maltz speaks of "the great humanistic tradition of culture" as if it were something permanent and accepted. It is difficult to assess the purport of such a generalization, but in the context of his article it seems evident that he refers to the movement of social realism that had its political origins in the American and French revolutions, developed as a critique of bourgeois society in the work of Balzac and others, and assumed a humanitarian and ethical form under the influence of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Ibsen and others. The moral and ethical values which these writers accepted, and which they found violated and debased in their own environment, were derived from the concept of the individual and the family in a free democratic society. The dignity and worth of the individual was to be achieved through moral purpose, suppression of selfish instincts, freedom and honor in family relationships.

The epoch of imperialism dissipated middle class illusions. The working class took over state power in the land of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. The laboring masses of the world moved to face their historic responsibilities. Under these circumstances, to speak of a "broad philosophic and emotional humanism" as something that has always existed means to go back to the past, to deny what is new, urgent, transient and alive in the world of torment and hope that we have inherited.

The humanism of the past is debased when it is torn from its historical setting to serve as an excuse for the avoidance of present struggle. Maltz appeals to the humanist tradition to justify his defense of James T. Farrell; he seems blind to the fact that Farrell has abandoned, in his writing, everything that was honest in the earlier traditions. Maltz even goes so far as to cite prejudice against Negroes and Jews as proof that "An artist can be a great artist without being an integrated or a logical or a progressive thinker on all matters. . . . We are all acquainted with Jews who understand the necessity of fighting fascism—but who do not see the relationship between fascism and their own discrimination toward Negroes. We know Negroes who fight discrimination against themselves, but are anti-Semitic."

Yes, we know these cases. And we also know the economic and social forces that create these diseased ideas, these splits in human lives and consciences that divide people and inhibit social action. We have no illusions about the power of these forces or their corrosive influence. We know how they operate in the field of culture, both through the direct proponents of fascist ideology and through writers like Farrell, Wright or Dos Passos, who render a less obvious and frequently more effective service to reaction. When Maltz speaks of anti-Semitism and hatred of the Negro as normal human failings, to be condoned because "most people do not think with thoroughgoing logic," he is performing a political act. He is using his writing as a weapon—for reaction.

Joseph Hirsch.

Fifty years ago, the split personality of the writer expressed a tragic personal and artistic dilemma. In grappling with the dilemma, the artist was able to produce powerful and socially meaningful work. Today the split has widened and deepened. (It may be for this reason that Maltz tends to speak of the writer and the citizen as separate persons, although they are united in the mind and body of one individual). Today the split is between the artist as a servant of the dominant class and the artist as a spokesman of the people. The artist who takes sides with reaction invariably insists on the dualism of thought and action, because it enables him to disclaim responsibility for the social consequences of his thought and at the same time to gain wider social influence by insisting on the intuitive wisdom of the artist and his devotion to larger values. (The technique is exemplified in its vulgarest and most revealing form in the emphasis on religion and "spiritual" values in the Hearst press.)

On the other hand, the artist who takes his place with the working class begins to outgrow the split personality, because his life and work are integrated. His creative activity is logical and objective. He is no longer concerned with timeless achievement, because he has real work to do in the real world. Anthropologists and sociologists use the term, culture, in its scientific sense, to describe the whole life-pattern of a society. The special meaning of culture, as a literary or aesthetic experience, has arisen because this kind of experience has been divorced from the people and reserved for the enjoyment of an educated, sensitive and well-fed minority. Today, history points the way to a culture that is whole and free, a part of the life-pattern of the people.

Marx says that "Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses." This is true of all thought and of all imaginative and creative activity. It is another way of saying that art is a weapon.

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READERS' FORUM

The Writer: Artist and Citizen

TO NEW MASSES: Maltz' article was bad but the answers seemed to me almost completely negative. In fact, they illustrate only too well an attitude that underlies he gravest faults of left-wing criticism and literature: the exclusive concentration on what *not* to say and what *not* to think. Which is a great pity—for if a more positive critical weapon than Marxism was ever devised, I don't know what it is. It is designed to add a dimension to our critical understanding, not—as it is too often misused—to flatten it to the outlines of a formula.

In correcting Maltz, Sillen speaks proudly of the fact that there was no "official policy" on a number of books which provoked controversy. I wonder whether that isn't exactly the trouble: the lack of any policy at all, "official" or otherwise, except for the sterile one of avoiding an error. How often have I seen reviewers take a book and, becoming fearful of a literary evaluation, select only a few surface political meanings for comment—comment which is also negative politically, since it too has the sole aim of not making a mistake. In other words, they themselves separate politics from art, and we have given them little guidance or incentive to do anything else. The very controversies that Sillen mentions were concerned entirely with the political content of the books. What we have done is to ignore an opportunity that non-Marxists do not have: to discuss the interrelation of political *and* literary failings or virtues in the author's work. If you run through Sillen's list of controversial books, you will see how many of them could have been discussed in such a context. I don't pretend to think that in every book, or even the majority of books, the literary and political qualities are evenly balanced—and sometimes the discrepancy is very wide—but when critics become afraid of drawing literary conclusions along with political ones, you have an excess of caution that amounts to irresponsibility.

For example, we say—correctly—that the deterioration of an author's politics affects his work. We say it—but how often do we try to show it? It is more customary for reviewers to point out that so-and-so has become a political stinker and so "naturally" his latest book is inferior to his previous ones. But here again we miss an opportunity: to *use the book itself* to document and illustrate a Marxist concept that is especially difficult for non-Marxists to understand.

I won't go through the catalogue of our critical failings; from the recent discussions I gather that they are as well known by now as our contributions. However, I object to their being treated parenthetically as "admitted faults" or minor flaws resulting from carelessness, incompetence and sectarianism. To admit a fault does not dispose of it. And since when are carelessness, incompetence and sectarianism regarded as minor faults in the cultural phases of our work or in any other phase?

The principle "Art is a Weapon" is too important for us to allow misuse and vulgarization through failure to discuss and understand its specific meaning. It wouldn't, for example, hurt us to clarify a fact which seems to need some clarifying: that art is a weapon if it is art.

B. G.

New York.

THE TRUTH IS POLITICAL

TO NEW MASSES: In my opinion Albert Maltz started off on a faulty premise. He projects the view that the writer's creation has its origin on the basis of art being or not being a weapon. The honest writer, regardless of whether he thinks art is or is not a weapon, must illuminate the life of his times, or some phase thereof. The great writers, in prose or poetry, have not bothered their heads over whether their product would or would not be a weapon for this or that class, but wrote because a powerful inner compulsion motivated them to give expression to their passionate feeling of life and social relationships. The honest writer of today cannot faithfully present even a slice of reality unless he has affiliated himself with the working class and its struggle for emancipation. As has been emphasized many times in left-wing critical works, art cannot be apolitical when truth itself is political.

Therefore, any honest writer who creates a work of stature because of the inner compulsion that drives him into print—a compulsion that has its sources in the identification of the writer with the struggle to end man's inhumanity to man—cannot help but bequeath a weapon to the working class. Still further: the class struggle has now grown so sharp and vicious that a proletarian writer who mumbles and bumbles instead of saying something has gifted the bourgeoisie with a weapon against the working class. Unfortunately, proletarian writers have not always given us proletarian works, just as—as Marx's daughter once said—not every movement of the working class is a working class movement. Maltz is justified in opposing bouquets being handed out by the critics of the literary Left because of the intentions of the author, but as Samuel Sillen has countered in the *Daily Worker*, if the critics of the literary Left were really class-conscious and developed Marxists, the critics would not be making this mistake.

MIKE HECHT.

Chicago.

NOT WITH RANCOR

TO NEW MASSES: The issues raised by Maltz deserve a temperate and considered discussion, precisely because an important and friendly writer has raised them, and precisely because the implications of his article cannot be accepted by Marxists. Maltz himself was careful to explain that he was merely offering a few ideas, and not a fixed formula either for himself or others. He is an honest man and artist. If he is wrong, let us show him how and why, not with rancor but with love as Lenin showed Gorky. Maltz, like Fast himself, is among the best that we have, and we should never forget that.

EDNA RICHTER.

New York.

PARABLE

TO NEW MASSES: This business of attempting to make a sharp distinction between the work of an artist and his politics is old stuff. Maltz's plea that the literary left wing direct its barbs and slings at the products of artistic creation and at nothing more, brings to mind this parable. . . .

An artist and his friend, the left wing critic, are walking arm-in-arm down the avenue and come to a stop in front of the store-window of an interior decorator. The artist is attracted to an unusual-looking lampshade and becomes rapturous over its remarkable craftsmanship and beautiful lines. When he fails to stir the enthusiasm of his friend, the critic, he berates him—"Why so glum? I suppose you can't see the beauty of this shade because the maker is German and not a trade-unionist." To which the critic sadly replies, "No, it isn't the fact that the lampshade was made by a German and carries no union label that bothers me. I am left cold by this work of art and all the talent that went into its making because that parchment is made of human skin taken from a victim from one of Hitler's murder camps."

Maltz, who would like the left-wing artist and critic to divorce art from politics, curiously enough, in citing Galsworthy for—"his searing portraits of class justice in human terms"—omits a play like *Strife*. Yet, even in *Justice*, what kind of Jew does Galsworthy portray? One familiar to his class—the wealthy social climber in search of good breeding.

I think it ought to be clearly understood that an attack against social abuses by Galsworthy and his kind is *not* a "bold" attack against one's class. In truth, the reformist is defending his class when he asks for an amelioration of its injustices. A continuation

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or worsening of social evils is recognized by these writers as a threat to the existence of their class. Whether Galsworthy himself is consciously aware of any political significance is irrelevant. The left-wing critic, in appraising these works, rightfully insists upon seeing more than talent and skill. It is downright stupid for anyone to claim that this is "narrow thinking."

Maltz's analysis of the literary left wing is self-revealing. His misconception of the true role of the artist in society is serious. In his arguments he builds up a lot of straw men and then proceeds to knock them down. But these straw men are his own. To pin the responsibility for them on the literary left wing is reprehensible for a guy like Maltz.

MAX PERKS.

Brooklyn.

MEN IN MOTION

TO NEW MASSES: What Albert Maltz cannot see, in his article "What Shall We Ask of Writers?" is that "men in motion" constitute the only valid (in creative writing especially) presentation of political issues.

Maltz would do well to remember that all art is politics and that there is no such animal as a social novel which is not political.

If a writer sees a need to do a job to fit a certain political job, that's his privilege, and it is also his *obligation* to do as *good*, as non-mechanical a job, as possible.

But the best writer, in my opinion, is the writer who can analyze, interpret, and deepen for his or her readers, the social forces constantly in motion, whether on the individual or on the mass scale. This approach Maltz overlooks altogether.

JEANNE PASTOR.

Croton-on-the-Hudson, N. Y.

NO SHROUD, PLEASE!

TO NEW MASSES: "What we shall ask of the writer" is certainly not what NM presents in its initial story of February 27, "You Were So Very Young."

For a long time a noncommercial story went begging to the little magazines. There the writer found "art" up the perverted alley of mysticism, confusion, the screwball and death. The theme of death is a favorite of decay and reaction. The shroud has no place in NM.

Consider the material of the story NM presented. A factory worker owns his own car, garage and house. Is this a fact of life or an "American Exceptional" worker? What is truth for a news column is truth in fiction as well. Again, is the doctor someone he cannot afford? Has society condemned this man to a slow death? Has he an occupational disease? Is he looking for a job he can handle? I got the barest hints but approaching death seems to drip like a forty-day rainstorm. What's he dying of? Silicosis? Bronchial asthma? *Consumption?* Hipititsia? I don't know. Do you? Does the writer? I doubt it. He's all a-gloat over the near-corpse with its candle and ikon.

Death is a small incident in a man's life. The conflict, the struggle, the dialectics (choose your own) of his life is the concern of the left wing writer. When the kid (the convenient viewpoint of ignorance) ran out of the death room NM should have joined him.

J. JACOBS.

Brooklyn.

P.S. the following issue of NM was worse —*it contained no* short story at all.

Other Histories

TO NEW MASSES: Speaking of Jewish History Week why not an Irish History Week? And a Polish, and a Scottish?

I am not kidding. As I understand it Negro History Week, for example, purports to go into the history of the Negro and his contribution to American culture. Why single out these two cultural groupings to the exclusion of all others? I understand of course that the Negroes and the Jews are dominant minorities and for that reason subject to persecution and the role of the scapegoat for capitalist ills and oppression. But isn't this true of other minorities in smaller areas?

I had a psychology prof once who advanced the theory that wherever you had a dominant minority there you had a scapegoat and discrimination. In my experience in different sections throughout the country, I have found that to be true.

Arriving in a small town outside of Pittsburgh where the Welsh were the predominant minority I was immediately told that they were Goats and had certain characteristics. Not long after my arrival I added a corollary to my psychology prof's theory: While the Goats were the underdogs in the town and responsible for all the evils thereof, representatives of their nationality or whatever you want to call it were also among the big shots of the town, the managers of the mills and what not. Hence it does not matter that their own people are in the upper strata: the bulk of the minority are still discriminated against. It seems to me race, color, creed do not matter: it is only class that counts. But we must frequently remind ourselves of this fact. To sum up, the predominant minority in any area is the oppressed and has representatives among the oppressors. This is the important thing to point out in any "History Week."

It is also important to realize that a group is not oppressed—more than superficially—because of race, color or creed, but because it is the predominant minority on a local, nationwide, or worldwide scale for that matter (witness anti-Slavism, anti-orientalism, anti-Negroism, anti-Judaism) to whom all ills can be ascribed. It is true for the Negroes, it is true for the Jews, it is true for the Welsh. It is true for countless other groupings. Perhaps we might add a second corollary to my prof's not-so-original theory: that is, that the predominant minority is one that has made itself felt, through contributions to culture, nation-building and affluence of some of its members.

But the point I want to make most is that discrimination is not *because* of racial or religious difference, not because of national origin. Therefore "Weeks" should not be broken down on the basis of any one of these distinctions but rather could take into consideration *all* of them in laying out a program of weeks. There are fifty-two weeks that could be used for the study of the contributions of different groups, no matter on what basis, to American culture. You have only to go into different communities to see what these groupings are.

In a steel city of the size of the fondly thought-of American "Middletown" I found it was the "Slavs" who were discriminated against, although there were other large minority groups such as the Negroes and Italians. Asking a boy whose parents had forbidden him to go with a "Slav" girl to state what nationality a Slav represented, he couldn't tell me. (Later I found the Slavic nationalities represented were largely Yugoslavians and Croatians.) In Buffalo, it's the Poles; on Cape Cod, the Portuguese; in Texas, the Mexicans (Southwesterners refer to a man as being Mexican or "white"); in Boston it's the Irish; in Maine it's the Swedes; in Canada it's the Scotch; in Alaska it's the Eskimo! On the West Coast it was the Japanese (excluding Japanese imperialist aims) and Chinese; in the Northwest it's the Swedes. And even in Swedish communities the Finns are discriminated against!

The full flowering of the culture of minorities is possible only under Socialism, we well know. The various festivals held in the Soviet Union clearly demonstrate this. But in the meantime we need not neglect our own multi-cultures. Various national groups take care of this themselves to a large extent but so far their national interests are used to *divide* rather than *unite* the various cultures. This is made use of in industrial towns under the guise of fostering or looking benignly down at the curious interesting racial groups. The respective churches of these groups, allied with the politics and business of the town or county, serve further to keep them divided. Hence it is up to us to portray, and draw help from these groups, in presenting them in their true role, in the advancement of American and international culture.

I therefore propose, in addition to Negro history week and Jewish history week, Irish, Scottish, even German, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, Greek, Slavic, Russian, Polish, Chinese, Japanese, and all the rest, History Weeks during which we will note their contributions.

In the fear that this musing with pencil will diffuse the History Week idea to a point where it is entirely weakened or negated, I should like to say that I realize that the most discriminated against, the most liable to be the goats for fascism, are the most important and the most urgent groups to be considered at this time.

JOHN MAY.

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REVIEW and COMMENT

FROM THE BOOKSHELF

THE PEOPLES OF THE SOVIET UNION, *by Corliss Lamont. Harcourt, Brace. $3.*

THE nationality problem is a highly complex one. It is not merely a matter of ethnography. It cannot be expressed by naked statistics. It is organically connected with political and economic relations and with the nature of the constitutional system of the state.

How this complex problem was solved by the USSR, a veritable "ethnographic museum" with some 170, if not more, ethnic groups, is clearly outlined in Corliss Lamont's valuable new contribution.

Immediately after its advent to power the Soviet government issued two most important decrees: one on peace, another on nationalities. Under the slogan "Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationalism," the Czars' policy for the minorities had meant political oppression, economic exploitation and enforced Russification, so that Russia had been called "The Prison of Nations." The Soviet state became, instead, the outstanding example of a family of nations, where all are treated as equals, where discrimination is no longer known.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia issued on Nov. 15, 1917, pledged "the equality and sovereignty of the peoples of the former Empire; their right to free self-determination, even to the extent of separation and the formation of independent states; the abolition of all national and national-religious privileges and restrictions; and the free development of the national minorities and ethnic groups inhabiting Russia."

The 1936 Constitution of the USSR in its paragraph 123 declares: "Equality of rights of citizens of the USSR, irrespective of their nationality or race, in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life, is an indefeasible law.

"Any direct or indirect restriction of the rights of, or, conversely, any establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as any advocacy of racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, is punishable by law."

The resulting transformation of various peoples of Russia, many of whom were in a nomadic, primitive and, in some cases, almost savage stage, into twentieth-century citizens enjoying science and technology, is described by Mr. Lamont. History has proved that even the most backward peoples can reach high levels of culture in a comparatively short time, if treated properly and offered proper opportunities.

Mr. Lamont's report on the treatment of women in the USSR is equally enlightening. Moslem women, who only recently had been treated strictly in accordance with the Nazi "Church, Children and Kitchen" dictum, now are enjoying absolute equality with men.

One important result of this policy of equality of races and sexes was the participation of all the various nationalities in World War II. While under the Czars some were not trusted in the armed forces, now all fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the Russians, or worked to supply the fighters. The various nationalities contributed lavishly to the heroic exploits of the Red Army and Navy and to the superhuman efforts of

Sentimentalized

We were the sentimentalized;
heroes of steel, rail and money ads;
bloodying the pages of magazines,
providing shock to the tired and effete;
we were the joes wept by the whores of the press,
mourned, at a rate, by their tax-deductible tears.

We were the prated, the proudly prattled
conjured by charlatans;
we were the dead, subject of Sunday speeches;
the living, eulogized at the Senate;
we were the drum, thumped at the big parades,
the bugle sweetly blown in a weeping wind;

the men face down on the beaches
photo'd and lithographed:
good conscience-prickers, a goad and a fury
nonchalant in our tanks!
We were the tough slang-slingers, the givers of death and candy;
our elegies lavishly spread over rotogravure.

Our beards were only the stripling's masquerade.
We loved pin-ups and class-B films, we were told;
we were the rave audience to the grand comic,
the hungering wise-crackers at the girl in tights;
plot for plays, sure-fire stuff at the theater:
truly heroes to children and Ma at home.

No blood stained our hands; we were the virtuous
beloved by the yellow-haired girl next door;
we were the sentimentalized,
assured of a future of rockets;
the sentimentalized; and war now is over;
and, ah, we are haters of liars and haters of fools!

MILT ROE.

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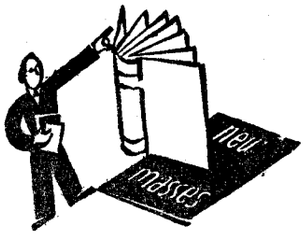

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the entire population in providing for the war.

As to the so-called nationalism of the Soviets, in my opinion the author is quite right to dispute the exaggerated prominence given to it by some critics.

"This Soviet ethical attitude extends to mankind as a whole, to all the manifold peoples of the earth in whatever country or continent they may be. Soviet patriotism, the loyalty of all inhabitants of the USSR to the great Soviet Motherland, has certainly developed under the stimulus of the war. But this is far from being equivalent to an exclusive Soviet or Russian nationalism about which some foreign observers have talked so loosely. And a true spirit of internationalism is still a major factor in Soviet life."

The aspect of Soviet internationalism most closely associated with the nationalities policy is the ideal that all the peoples of the earth should march forward together in peace, freedom, and equality.

"The Soviets have underlined the great truth that all peoples are part of the same human family, possessing common needs and aspirations, and sharing ever in the high adventure of life upon this ample and abundant earth."

This is a very useful, informative book, always readable, and often fascinating. VICTOR A. YAKHONTOFF.

The Buryats Come of Age

DAWN IN SIBERIA, *by G. D. R. Phillips. Transatlantic Arts, Forest Hills, N. Y. $3.25.*

"DAWN IN SIBERIA" is not an ordinary correspondent's book, although it was written by a first-class journalist. Nor is it a book about Siberia in general, although it contains many revealing passages about general conditions in Siberia. It is a book about a single people, the Buryats, blood brothers of the Mongols in Outer Mongolia, and a people who inhabit the strategic trans-Baikal woods and pastureland. The rise of the Buryats to modern statehood is the theme of the book.

The Buryat-Mongols are just one of the 170-odd peoples who make up the Soviet family of nations, and though one of the less well-known they are by no means among the least important. The Buryat-Mongol land is crossed by the Trans-Siberian railway as it swings east toward the Pacific after rounding the remarkably deep Lake Baikal. The land's strategic position on the overland trade routes between Siberia and China as well as the people's ethnic relationship to other Mongols of inner Asia lend the story of Buryat-Mongolia first-rate importance as a touchstone for evaluating the impact of Soviet life among native Asiatics.

Few writers on life in Soviet Russia today have brought to their subject less prejudiced preconceptions and more painstaking elucidation than has G. D. R. Phillips, who has mastered the written lore of the Buryat people from antiquity to the twentieth century. Following the author through the earliest ethnic origins, the later Russian conquest, and the great revolution, the reader is fully prepared to accept and understand the new nation that came into being with the founding of the Buryat-Mongol Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. From this book writers on modern Siberia can learn much about method, and general readers can gain a satisfying knowledge about a Soviet people worthy of their attention. ARTHUR STARK.

Superficial History

WOODROW WILSON AND THE GREAT BETRAYAL, *by Thomas A. Bailey. Macmillan. $3.50.*

THIS narrative of the struggle for American ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and adherence to the League of Nations—the failure of which is the "great betrayal"—is impassioned and accurate, but repetitious and superficial. Professor Bailey is a staunch partisan of the Wilson group in the struggle, though he regrets their failure to accept relatively minor compromises which might have assured Senate ratification.

The Wilson group recognized the self-evident interdependence of the world and sought some political structure to formalize that fact. But such recognition was not, per se, progressive. That group pursued the policy of maintaining the iniquities of monopoly capitalism, preserving Central Europe from "Bolshevist intrigue" (to quote Wilson), attempting the overthrow of the Soviet Republics, and failing that, throwing a *cordon sanitaire* about them, enforcing the subjection of the colonial peoples and implementing the infamous secret treaties of spoliation drafted in the midst of a "democratic" war, knowledge of the existence of which is mendaciously denied by the League's creator.

But all this is left unconsidered; and the vital significance of the period as the starting point of the deepest contra-

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dictions in the capitalist world, and the first successful break in that world represented by the shattering Bolshevik revolution, are ignored.

The details of caucus meetings, party platforms, individual preferences, the Lodge and Hitchcock reservations, and the backstairs power of Mrs. Wilson are faithfully delineated here. But for the meaning of the Lloyd George-Clemenceau-Wilson triangle, and the character, purposes and differences of the class they represented a reader must look elsewhere.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

Ten-Day John

JOHN DONAR: COMMON MAN, *by Walter and Elizabeth Rogers. Victory Library, New Orleans. $2.*

AFTER reading this chronicle, dedicated to "the little shots of American labor," one senses the force behind the rank and file of American labor. The variety and depth of John Donar's experiences in organizing workers, Okies, the unemployed and veterans of World War I is inspiring. In his wanderings throughout the United States, he combined an instinctive understanding of the aspirations of common men with the ability to teach them how to express these aspirations in their day-to-day struggles.

The son of an impoverished immigrant miner, John Donar left home when he was twelve. He has been on the move ever since. Enlisting in the army at seventeen, he was among the first American troops to see action in the last war. When, after long front-line and occupation service, he went "over the hill" to avoid being used as a strikebreaker, Donar became a "ten-day John," a rough-and-ready organizer without any ties of family or position. Choosing those areas where the workers were weakest, he plunged into the midst of American labor struggles. Whether in the IWW or the Worker's Alliance, among silver miners or students at a labor college, Donar's working-class militancy and keen sense of tactics furthered the fight against reaction. No one can read his earthy personal history without gaining sharp insights into the techniques of mass organization.

Unfortunately, the authors have not done justice to John Donar's story. Aiming at stenographic accuracy, they have failed to sift the wheat from the chaff. Much that is dramatic and instructive is buried under a mass of irrelevant detail.

If the reader is not deterred by the presentation, he will gain much from this book: a warm, human knowledge of American workers and a strong faith in their ability to shape a newer, richer life.

EPHIM G. FOGEL.

Adventure Story

OFFICIALLY DEAD, The story of Commander C. D. Smith, *by Quentin Reynolds. Random House. $2.75.*

QUENTIN REYNOLDS, the well-known and only occasionally corny war correspondent here traces, via the first person singular, the wartime record of an American naval commander and some of his Allied associates caught in Shanghai on the morning of December 7, 1941. Commander Columbus Darwin Smith woke up there to find a war on. He had just time to rush to his offices and, in the capacity of top undercover man in charge of a number of American listening posts up and down the China coast, contact Pearl Harbor and then order his outfit's radio sets destroyed. Smith soon found himself in jail along with several other Allied military men. Japanese treatment began with courteous consideration for their rank but deteriorated when they were transferred from naval to military custody. They ended up in the hideous squalor of an enemy prison in Shanghai, one of the strongest jails in Asia. Despite a hernia, Smith managed to crack this "unbreakable" nut, escape out of Shanghai and across occupied China to Kunming.

Interesting as is this recital of heroism, pluck and determination it would have been more interesting were there more understanding in the book of the issues involved. The conflict is presented as simply one of nearly helpless men winning through all odds against a powerful, crafty enemy. Commander Smith never clearly seems to grasp the nature of the enemy. They are to him merely brutish and stupid apemen. From the Chinese who aided them he should have got a better hold on the realities.

KURT CONWAY.

Journalist Anecdotes

THE WORLD IS THEIR BEAT, *by J. C. Oestreicher. Duell, Sloan & Pearce. $2.50.*

THE Foreign Director of International News Service declares that "American journalism is still an exciting profession with overtones of gayety." To prove it, he has collected anecdotes about US correspondents in the war, and has included them rather loosely

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in an INS-eye view of the American and foreign press.

His superficial analyses leave the curious reader completely unaware of the powers behind the American press. While merely scratching the surface in this area, Mr. Oestreicher manages very ably to follow the Hearst line with a deep dig at Russia. That is far from the "good" reporting which he claims could prevent another war by giving the American people the *whole* truth.

In addition, there are two serious omissions in the book which cannot be overlooked: (1) No mention of Negro correspondents and the difficulties they encountered; (2) Not even a wilted orchid for the hundreds of front-line soldier reporters who made a vast contribution not only to the wire services such as INS, but to the entire home-town press, all without benefit of by-lines, expense accounts, press camp comforts and the honorary rank and privileges of a major. ED STONE.

Vanilla Sundae

DAISY KENYON, *by Elizabeth Janeway. Doubleday, Doran. $2.50.*

DELIVERED to us as a historical novel of the years 1940-42, it might be difficult to recall those recent times from Miss Janeway's account of them.

It is the story of Kitty Foyleish Daisy Kenyon, the superficial half of whose split personality makes her living by magazine illustration and advertising "art" while the deeper artist half passively complains without getting anywhere. It is the story primarily of her relation with two men, meek and sensitive Peter Lapham and powerful, overbearing Dan O'Mara. The chatty account bubbles along like soda pop. The author makes it a "historical novel" by mentioning places and dates, and second-guessing the war and its politics. This historical matter is not enough either to lift it above or to spoil its character as a magazine-serial type of story. MILTON BLAU.

What Is a Slav?

TWO HUNDRED FIFTY MILLION AND ONE SLAVS, *by Vlaho Vlahovic. Slav Publications. Board binding $2; Cloth $3.*

MR. VLAHOVIC'S *Two Hundred Fifty Million and One Slavs* is packed with interesting information on who the Slavs are, where they came from—in legend, tradition and folklore. He has sought to present "historical and geographical information about the Slav lands, which has so far been but scantily satisfied." Mr. Vlahovic traces the origin and development of the Polabians, who were absorbed by the Germans; the Lusatian Sorbs (Wends), Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Carpathian Russians, Croatians, Serbians, Slovenians, Bulgarians and the Burgenland Croatians. A valuable source book, its most striking shortcoming is that it omits discussion of the origin of the Slav islands in Hungary and Rumania and fails to deal with the relations of these two peoples with the surrounding Slavs.

MARTIN T. BROWN.

Guide to Nowhere

THE VETERANS' BEST OPPORTUNITIES, *by Lt. Comdr. Edward R. Fiske, USNR. Duell, Sloan & Pearce. $2.50.*

A USEFUL two-page leaflet on where to get information concerning the advisability and methods of establishing a retail business could be made out of this 324-page book of platitudes, contradictions, and naivetes such as "Paradoxically, those who have achieved the greatest success in business have been those who put personal gain at the very foot of their list of goals." No doubt this last refers to GM, GE and WU.

The author recommends, chiefly, such sources of information as the US Department of Commerce, whose material he uses generously, local trade organizations, veterans' centers, and various wholesalers and retailers. The book has a suitable two-page foreword by Dale Carnegie. MACK ENNIUS.

Rags to Riches

THE WILDCATTERS: An Informal History of Oil Hunting in America, *by Samuel W. Tait, Jr. Princeton University Press. $3.*

FAMOUS LEADERS OF INDUSTRY, *by Joseph A. Moore. L. C. Page. $2.75.*

MR. TAIT, in his documented study, provides some illuminating data on the constant search for oil. Tracing the path of the "wildcatters" (men who sunk shafts on pure speculation) back and forth across the country, he gives a vivid picture of the stupidity of a system which makes possible the seizure of a nation's natural resources solely for profit. But ignoring the social implications of his research, Mr. Tait concentrates on anecdotes about the men who became millionaires overnight, only to revert to poverty when the wells ran dry or they were swindled out of their holdings.

Famous Leaders of History, the fifth

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in a series, is a liberal dose of Horatio Alger. Using the life stories of twenty-two "self-made" men, the author repeats the time-worn recipe for "success" so long handed out by capitalist apologists. "Let your work be your life," Mr. Moore advises, ignoring such realities as strikes, unemployment, etc. Oddly, or perhaps aptly enough, he includes as a "leader of industry" William Green, placing him alongside Henry Luce, Andrew J. Higgins and Alfred P. Sloan, Jr.

GILBERT LAWRENCE.

"Life" in Europe

LOST CONTINENT, *by Noel F. Busch. Harper. $2.50.*

ONE wonders what excuse there can be for publishing this "informal Baedeker to the modern badlands." This *Life* correspondent considers Europe "no fit place for man or beast and not likely soon to become one" because, apparently, so many Europeans are Communists. He compares Tito and his aides with Al Capone and his gangsters, and objects only mildly to Italian Fascism. Mussolini ran the country "efficiently" for a decade, until he lost himself in sex affairs. If Italian Fascism became bad in the end, that was the fault of the Germans. Busch even treats the Nazis with kid gloves. At the Buchenwald concentration camp he is shocked, not by the horrors, but by the existence of allegedly Communist-controlled prisoners' committees: "Many of the horrors attributed to the Gestapo authorities," he quotes his apparently well chosen guide, "were not only encouraged by the committees but instigated by them." As for France, he seeks to exonerate the collaborationists by claiming that there was no Frenchman who did not collaborate with the Germans to some degree: "To buy a loaf of bread was to contribute to the German economy and it was necessary for the French like everyone else to eat."

Were the publishers so hungry they had to accept this garbage for publication?

ALBERT WEINER.

Brief Review

BILINGUAL SERIES, RUSSIAN-ENGLISH. *Transatlantic Arts. 75¢ each.*

WITH universities throughout the country establishing courses in Russian Language and Culture and the mastery of Russian being undertaken in other centers, and in widespread home study, the appearance of these bilingual texts of Russian classics is a blessing. The four thus far issued are *Three Tales* by Pushkin, *The Greatcoat* by Gogol, *Mumu* by Turgenev, and *Two Tales* by Tolstoy. It is to be hoped that, aside from issuing more in this valuable series, the publishers will reduce the price in future issues, since it is rather high for such small board-covered booklets; and they would also be well advised to change the present arrangement of the Russian and English texts, printing the Russian on the right-hand page and the English translation on the left, instead of the present reverse order.

Worth Noting

THE Boas Dance Group, a modern dance company directed by Franziska Boas, will give its first public performance on Saturday and Sunday evenings, April 6 and 7, at the Studio Theater, 108 W. 16 St., New York. Formed in October 1945, the Boas Dance Group is the operating nucleus for the establishment of a cooperative modern dance repertory theater. Miss Boas, daughter of the distinguished and well-loved anthropologist Franz Boas, will participate in the performances.

THE *Daily People's World*, California's labor newspaper, announces its second annual short story competition. Three prizes of $100, fifty dollars and twenty-five dollars respectively, twenty Honorable Mentions of five dollars each, and a special Reader's Jury Award of twenty-five dollars are offered. The judges are: Howard Fast and Dorothy Parker, novelists; Professor George R. Stewart, head of the English Department, University of California, and author of several novels; and Marie de L. Welch, poet.

Manuscripts are limited to 2,500 words. The contest closes April 30, 1946. Address Contest Editor, *Daily People's World*, 590 Folsom St., San Francisco 5, California.

ALL types of clothing, medical supplies and essential foods are urgently needed for shipment to France, according to the American Friends of the Families of Martyrs of the French Resistance, a committee formed at the plea of Mme. Mathilde Peri, widow of the great French Communist leader murdered by the Nazis. Send or bring all such supplies to the headquarters of the committee, 22 E. 21 St., c/o Designed Tiles, between 9:30 AM and 6 PM.

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SIGHTS and SOUNDS

ROME OF THE RESISTANCE

"Open City" reviewed by JOSEPH FOSTER

A MAGNIFICENT product of a resurgent, democratic Italy is *Open City*, a filmic masterpiece now at the World Theater. It is the first film in a long, long time, that has the shattering impact of *Potemkin*. It has the simplicity and honesty and directness of all great art, and I cannot recall any war film of any country that has caught with such skill the awesome strength of the people in concentrated, unwavering struggle for freedom.

The south of Italy, freed from the fascists, has organized its Committee of Liberation. One of its leaders is sent to the "open city" with money and instructions for the Rome Underground. His courier between the city and suburban resistance groups is a Partisan priest, the pastor of a working class neighborhood parish. He is betrayed, together with the priest, by his former girl, an ambitious actress who is beguiled by favors, dope, fur coats and much personal attention from a lesbian working with the Nazis.

Around this simple plot is woven a complete pattern of daily living. The dramatic purposes of the film, built up out of the Nazi man-hunt for the Resistance leaders, is intensified by the casual details of people living in close-packed relationships. Because it was not necessary that this film make concessions to cynical production controls, to glamor traditions, to box-office rationales, to a puerile moral bureaucracy, these details are presented with rare clarity and honesty. The characters' fates are determined by their own personal qualities, by their convictions, ambitions, weaknesses, strengths, cupidities, loves. When the affianced of an Underground printer becomes pregnant, when she dies at the hands of her oppressors, when her sister sells herself to the Brownshirts, when the priest from time to time forgets his vows and audibly wishes the Nazis in hell, when the protagonist's girl friend sells him out in a moment of weakness, when the Communist leader dies of torture without talking, you are neither surprised nor incredulous. Their behavior carries such an overpowering reality that you accept it as you accept the happenings on your block.

But what makes these characters notable is the courage and dignity that pervades their all-too-human actions. The film contributes depth and richness to the word "resistance." To the world at large the word has indicated an underground army that secretly battled and disrupted the armies of occupation. But each individual underground fighter lived constantly in the shadow of death; each carried on because he was driven by a timeless hunger for freedom. In the film the leaders do not regard such tenacity as heroism. After their capture, an Austrian deserter, who later hangs himself, worries about the torture in store for them. "They can turn heroes into cowards," he says. The Communist replies that he is no hero. To him the hero is the man of classic definition, a figure who never tires, falters or knows defeat. He knows that weariness is one of the major obstacles of the battle—sheer physical exhaustion that sometimes tempts the strongest to quit, and leads the weakest to surrender. He must constantly remind himself and his friends of the issues at stake. When his friend sits with his girl in the hallway of the teeming apartment house, he warns her that the fight is worth all the anguish, that when the struggle seems most hopeless, she must think of their unborn baby. If they yield, life must become meaningless. Thus in reassuring her he is reassuring himself and the whole Underground.

THE producers of *Open City* achieved such excellent results despite serious technical difficulties. They were faced with a disheartening shortage of building materials, paint and lighting equipment. There were times when even the electricity petered out. This is not to say that such handicaps were not reflected in the finished product. It was impossible, for instance, to convey a feeling of luxury or self-indulgence in the physical quarters of the Nazi leaders, or in the apartment of the actresses, as the script required. There were other spots where good technical finish would have underscored to greater advantage the film's symbolism. Nevertheless, *Open City* proves again that a low-budget picture can be magnificently successful, that such films can be made by progressive groups and be distributed much as this film will be distributed—and perhaps even more widely in 16mm size; that we do not have to depend upon Hollywood and commercial production exclusively for the kind of films that should be made.

The acting in *Open City*, performed by as heterogeneous a group as ever composed a cast, is incomparable. During the early days of liberation it was difficult to round up a full complement of professionals. As a result, a journalist was picked for the role of the Communist, a cafe singer to play the sweetheart of the Underground printer, a shoe-shine boy was her son by another marriage, a comedian played the extremely sensitive role of the priest, and there were former salesmen, housewives, soldiers, workers for the rest.

All the scenes are part of a firmly-integrated whole. However, a couple of incidents demonstrate the complete spirit and purpose of the movie. When the Underground leader is near death, the Nazi inquisitor makes one last effort to bribe him. He promises amnesty not only for the Communist but for his whole party if he will inform on the Resistance leaders. Strapped to a chair, scorched and scourged, bleeding and broken, the Communist summons up his last bit of strength to spit with blinding contempt in the face of his tormentor. At that precise moment, the two protagonists are defined for all time; the quiet strength, the immovable will, the fierce pride of the one; the impotent rage, the chagrin and defeat of the other. In carefully picked types, the homosexuality of the immaculately booted and uniformed torturer is posed in inevitable defeat against the solid masculinity of his opponent.

A few moments later the priest is brought in to watch the end. In close-up, he leans towards the battered face of his friend, his eyes reflecting an un-

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mistakable exultation. "You did not speak," he murmurs. Through slits of his puffed eyes, the Communist manages an answering gleam, a last spark of his unvanquished spirit. Later, when the priest is about to be shot, he thinks of the dead leader and of his own imminent demise. He concludes that to die well is not nearly so difficult as to live well.

I urge you to see *Open City* as soon as possible. It is the classic of our generation.

"Truckline Cafe"

In Maxwell Anderson's new play, *Truckline Cafe*, the scene is a roadside diner on a California coastal highway, the characters are highway flotsam, and the dramatic situation turns on the chance and momentary confrontation of two tense marital conflicts. In our contemporary realistic tradition these elements do not allow for being "literary," but Mr. Anderson insists, and smuggles "literature" in.

His device is the "quaint" character, from whom the improbable may be expected. His philosophic owner of the diner, unobtrusively wise and omnisympathetic, is as complete a fulfillment as I have seen on the stage of that authoreal wishful thinking, the common man who reads the best books. For Mr. Anderson's symbolic purposes the reading includes a work on relativity, a treatise on endangered civilization by Lewis Mumford, and James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. These not only provide Mr. Anderson with opportunities for literary allusions, but through appropriate symbols they summarize scenes which the author has failed to integrate through the action.

Mr. Anderson's intention is to consider the ravages war has brought into people's lives; and the message is that just as the war-ravaged countries must rebuild upon and with what is left to them, so individuals must face out their personal disasters and rebuild their lives upon what remains to them. The miseries of two couples, morbidly obsessed with their own or their partners' infidelities during the wartime separation, are the texts for the demonstration and the message.

The irony is that, as the play presents it, the credible part of the message is the part that violates it. The man who cannot rebuild and murders his wife is believable; while the couple who learn from his tragedy, and set out to rebuild, are impossible to believe. Mr. Anderson makes them highly cultured, intellectual and over-articulate; and their dilemma trails out in metaphors. In the strain to project the significant, the actual situation becomes insignificant and in the end unbelievable.

But the weakest part of the play is the drift of incidental characters and their small but what are intended to be significant impacts on the main characters. This is meant to give a sense of the flow of life but, dramatically, it adds up to little more than a tableau. The callous vacationers, the drunks and their punks, the sightseers and the time-killers have little more meaning or role than costumed symbols. They neither grow out of nor into the drama itself.

The acting was generally good, with the high spot the performance of Marlon Brando, a young actor worth watching.

Isidor Schneider.

"Outdoor Show," lithograph by Sally Mewhinney.

"Twelfth Night"

Spontaneity and freshness marked the presentation of *Twelfth Night* on the March of Drama Repertory Play schedule at the Dramatic Workshop.

With an all-student cast, a free directorial hand, and traditional costuming, the comedy was projected against an illuminated screen, with a minimum of props and a circular treadmill (alarmingly noisy) to lend fluidity to the action. This is friendly Shakespeare—one might say Shakespeare

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without fame. It is comedy that competes with, say, *I Remember Mama*, down the street, rather than the highly professional *Winter's Tale*, in the same neighborhood. Chouteau Dyer, in charge of the Workshop production, is to be congratulated on the goodwill and comfort, one is tempted to say, of this production.

There is a good deal to be said for omitting reverence in producing a comedy as lighthearted, as witty, as unpretentious as *Twelfth Night*. When the conventional interpretations are limbered up a little by a fresh reading, such as Rosalind Wilder's Viola, there are moments of easy charm and good humor. James Walsh's Malvolio demonstrated how lightly the comedy can be played; Gerald Prosk, as Toby, did well with a somewhat cut-down role.

There are, however, dangers in inserting modern speech rhythms and modern accent into a text whose spirit may be ageless but whose letters are not quite: a slangy overtone jars the ear, and the line between comedy and clumsy burlesque becomes uncomfortably thin. One Shakespearian problem remained unsolved by this as by any other production: the humor of madness is lost to us today. Malvolio's imprisonment and mental torture is to our minds merely cruel.

Serious technical work is evident in the care with which these Workshop productions are built up. One looks forward to the productions scheduled for following weeks: *Mourning Becomes Electra*, *Tonight We Improvise* and *Lysistrata*. Tickets for the series or for single performances may be obtained from the Dramatic Workshop at 247 W. 48 St., New York 19.

JANE LAWSON.

Bela Bartok

SOME measure of the true stature of the late Bela Bartok was revealed to New York audiences in two recent commemorative concerts—one by the League of Composers and the other by the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The first presented a survey of Bartok's works, ranging from the early String Quartet, written in 1908, to the latest of his versions of Hungarian folksong, and included the Second Violin Sonata (1922) and the Piano Sonata (1926). At the Philadelphia concert, Gyorgy Sandor performed one of the very last of Bartok's works, the Third Piano Concerto.

It is almost impossible to translate into words the essence of a composition or of a composer—especially of one whose idiom is so modern. But of Bartok it may be said that he was one of our earliest modernists, and he remained an irrepressible experimenter to the end. Even the first string quartet, distinguished more for its experimental than intrinsic quality, shows a daring, which contrasts with much of the work composed at the same time by others. But it is in the works of the twenties, and thereafter, that his true genius is best reflected. Whatever the composition, one is immediately made aware of three outstanding qualities; a daring freshness, expressing itself in novel rhythms and phrases; the permeation of his work by folksong and folk music; and a sharp, overpowering intensity, sometimes, as in the Violin Sonata, close to a breaking point.

The music is frequently harsh and grating—but more often, as in the great Piano Sonata (magnificently played on this occasion by Andor Foldes), rich and compelling in the originality of its rhythms and harmonies. This is music as far removed from the sensuous opulence of Debussy as it is from the delicate modernistic traceries of Hindemith. It strains the sensibilities and the attention of the listener, but it always involves him.

Nor did the quality of Bartok's creativeness suffer a decline in his last, unhappy years of self-exile. The concerto for piano, finished save for a few last bars, is as original and incisive as any of the other works coming before it. It is, however, more reflective in the second movement, and more tranquil. But it is rich throughout, vibrant, and moving—and Mr. Sandor, a pupil of Bartok, performed it with love, understanding and virtuosity.

FREDERIC EWEN.

Records

HAYDN'S *Symphony No. 98 in B-flat* belongs with those last works of the master which rank with the greatest in musical literature. It has depth, gaiety, brilliance and feeling, and a supreme sense of form—all perfectly revealed in the recording by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Toscanini. Every movement is a gem. (Victor DM-1025, four twelve-inch records; the eighth side contains the Scherzo from Mendelssohn's *Octet in E-flat*.)

THE Budapest String Quartet, assisted by Milton Katims, violist, gives us a rather pedestrian recording of

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Mozart's *Quintet in C-major* (Koechel 515). Nor is it one of the composer's major works, though written at about the same time as the famous *Quintet in G-minor*. Its content is rather thin, too often reminiscent of his own far finer moments in other compositions. (Columbia MM-four twelve-inch records.)

RACHMANINOFF'S *Isle of the Dead* is almost forty years old today, but it is still good Rachmaninoff, imaginative, vivid, unabashed in its romantic nostalgia, and devoid of that long-winded pretentiousness which blights the symphonies. The Boston Symphony Orchestra under Koussevitzky performs this composition beautifully, in a recording of great mechanical excellence. (Victor DM-1024, three twelve-inch records.)

F. E.

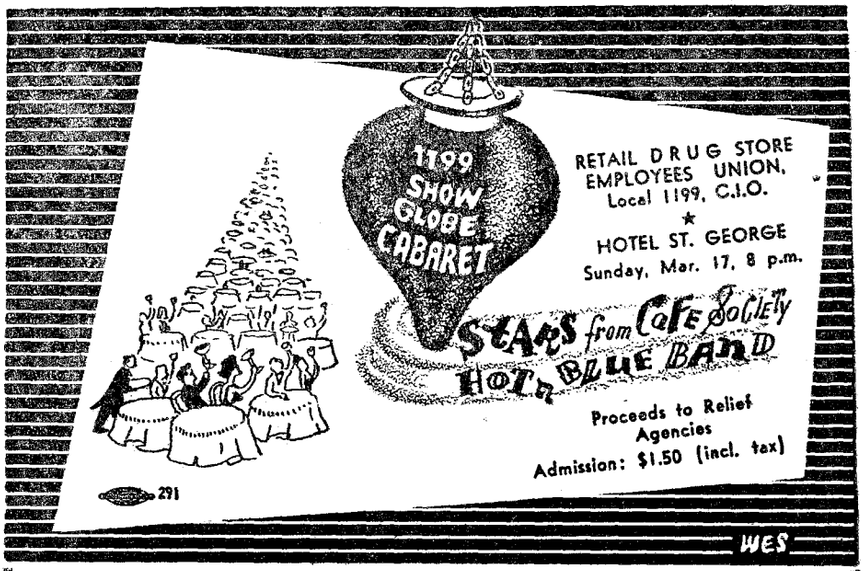
Workingmen's Paris

(*Continued from page* 17)

them 1,058 women and 651 children. Of this total, 1,179 died of cruelty in prison. More than 10,000 received prison sentences of varying duration. Thousands of others were sent into forced labor or deported to distant penal colonies. Altogether 270 persons were condemned to death, eight of them women. The suppression had been so thorough that businessmen complained of a labor shortage in 1872.

Many Communards, escaping the net Versailles had thrown around the capital, found a haven in Belgium, Switzerland and England. Marx was uneasy about their safety in England. It would not have surprised him, he told the General Council, if the liberal Ministry of William Gladstone had prosecuted them in return for a profitable commercial treaty.

To aid the refugees Marx headed a Committee for Foreign Relief which appealed to friends everywhere, including the United States. The need, of course, was much greater than the sums collected, and the General Council had no available funds, the claims of its enemies notwithstanding. Marx's selflessness and activity in behalf of the Communards won their deep gratitude. "Your kindness moved me to tears," one wrote him. "Your devotion to the cause of revolution and the friendship with which you have honored me makes it possible for me to turn directly to you in case of extreme need." The letter was a candid tribute to the great labor leader.



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